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WHITTIER-LAND

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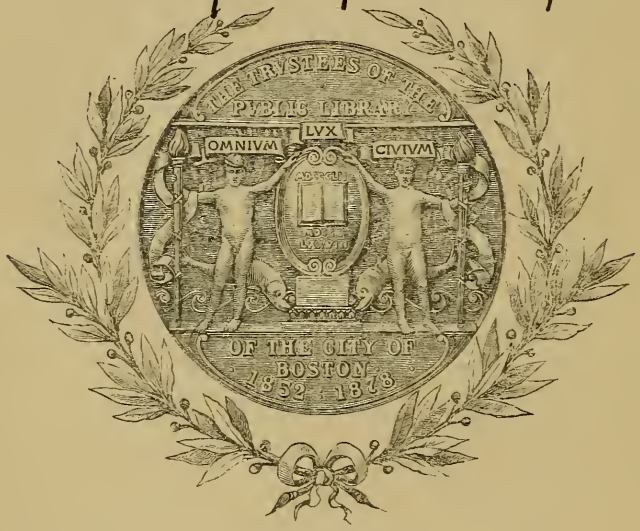

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. With Portraits and other Illustrations. 2 vols. crown 8vo, gilt top, $4.00.

WHITTIER-LAND

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WHITTIER'S BIRTHPLACE

WHITTIER-LAND

A Handbook of North Essex

CONTAINING MANY ANECDOTES OF AND POEMS
BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER
NEVER BEFORE COLLECTED

BY

SAMUEL T. PICKARD

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER"

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAP AND ENGRAVINGS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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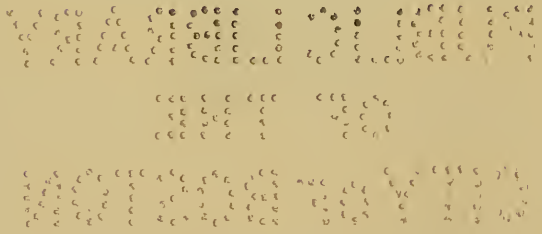

PREFACE

THIS volume is designed to meet a call from tourists who are visiting the Whittier shrines at Haverhill and Amesbury in numbers that are increasing year by year. Besides describing the ancestral homestead and its surroundings, and the home at Amesbury, an attempt is made to answer such questions as naturally arise in regard to the localities mentioned by Whittier in his ballads of the region. Many anecdotes of the poet and several poems by him are now first published. It is with some hesitancy that I have ventured to add a chapter upon a phase of his character that has never been adequately presented: I refer to his keen sense of humor. It will be understood that none of the impromptu verses I have given to illustrate his playful moods were intended by him to be seen outside a small circle of friends and neighbors. This playfulness, however, was so much a part of his character from boyhood to old age that I think it deserves some record such as is here given.

For those who are interested to inquire to whom refer passages in such poems as "Memories," "My Playmate," and "A Sea Dream," I now feel at liberty to give such information as could not properly be given at the time when I undertook the biography of the poet.

If any profit shall be derived from the sale of this book, it will be devoted to the preservation and care of the homes here described, which will ever be open to such visitors as love the memory of Whittier.

S. T. P.

WHITTIER HOME, AMESBURY, MASS.,
March, 1904.

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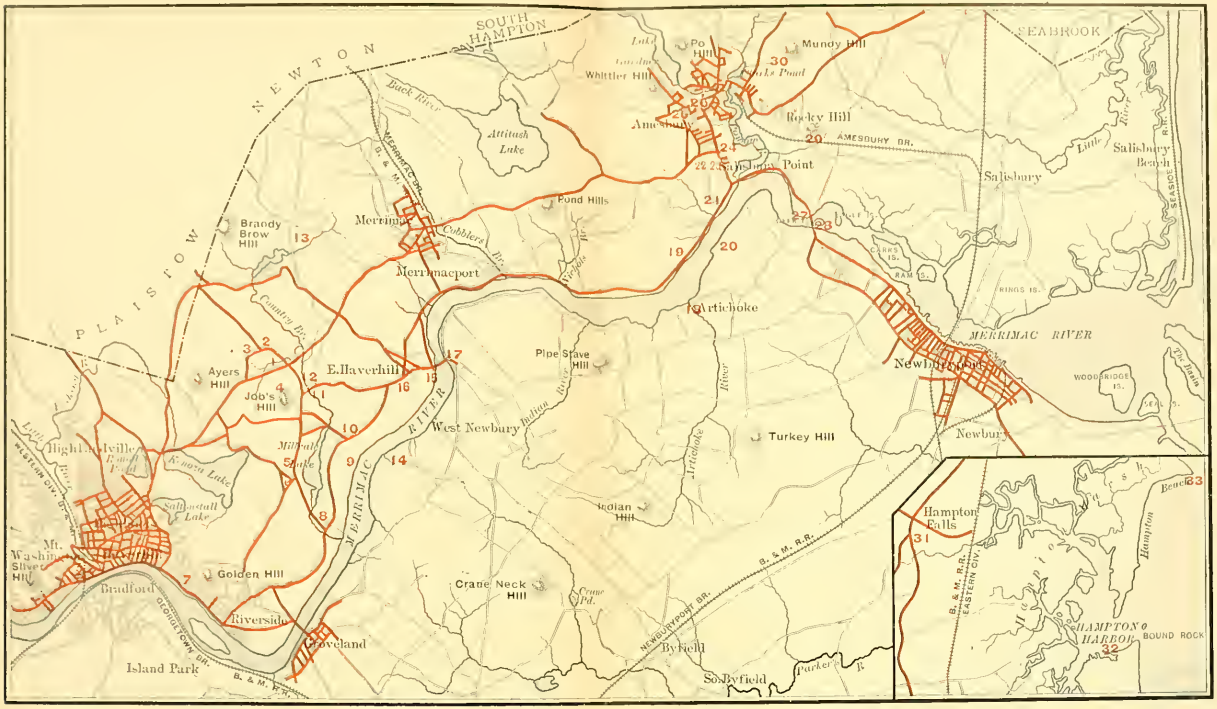

MAP OF WHITTIER-LAND

KEY:—

1. The Whittier Birthplace.
2. Joshua Coffin's School, in house now occupied by Thomas Guild. Scene of poem "To My Old Schoolmaster."
3. Site of District School. Scene of "In School Days."
4. Job's Hill.
5. East Haverhill Church.
6. Cemetery referred to in "The Old Burying Ground."
7. The Sycamores.
8. Ramoth Hill.
9. Hunting Hill.
10. Grave of the Countess.
11. Country Bridge.
12. Site of Thomas Whittier's Log House.
13. Birchy Meadow, where Whittier taught school.
14. Home of Sarah Greenleaf.
15. Home of Dr. Elias Weld and of the Countess, Rocks Village.
16. "Old Garrisou," the Peaslee House.
17. Rocks Bridge.
18. Curson's Mill, Artichoke River.
19. Pleasant Valley.
20. The Laurels.
21. Site of "Goody" Martin's House.
22. Whittier Burial Lot, Union Cemetery.
23. Macy House.
24. The Captain's Well.
25. Friends' Meeting-House, Amesbury.
26. Whittier Home, Amesbury.
27. Hawkswood.
28. Deer Island, Chain Bridge, home of Mrs. Spofford.
29. Rocky Hill Church.
30. The Fountain, Mundy Hill.
31. House at Hampton Falls, where Whittier died.
32. Scene of "The Wreck of Rivermouth."
33. Boar's Head.

HAVERHILL

WHITTIER-LAND

I

HAVERHILL

The whole valley of the Merrimac, from its source among the New Hampshire hills to where it meets the ocean at Newburyport, has been celebrated in Whittier's verse, and might well be called "Whittier-Land." But the object of these pages is to describe only that part of the valley included in Essex County, the northeastern section of Massachusetts. The border line separating New Hampshire from the Bay State is three miles north of the river, and follows all its turnings in this part of its course. For this reason each town on the north of the Merrimac is but three miles in width. It was on this three-mile strip that Whittier made his home for his whole life. His birthplace in Haverhill was his home for the first twenty-nine years of his life. He lived in Amesbury the remaining fifty-six years. The birthplace is in the East Parish of Haverhill, three miles from the City Hall, and three miles from what was formerly the Amesbury line. It is nearly midway between the New Hampshire line and the Merrimac River. In 1876 the township of Merrimac was formed out of the western part of Amesbury, and this new town is interposed between the two homes, which are nine miles apart.

Haverhill, Merrimac, Amesbury, and Salisbury are each on the three-mile-wide ribbon of land stretching to the sea, on the left bank of the river. On the opposite bank are Bradford, Groveland, Newbury, and Newburyport.

The whole region on both sides of the river abounds in beautifully rounded hills formed of glacial deposits of clay and gravel, and they are fertile to their tops. At many points they press close to the river, which has worn its channel down to the sea-level, and feels the influence of the tides beyond Haverhill. This gives picturesque effects at many points. The highest of the hills have summits about three hundred and sixty feet above the surface of the river, and there are many little lakes and ponds nestling in the hollows in every direction. In the early days these hills were crowned with lordly growths of oak and pine, and some of them still retain these adornments. But most of the summits are now open pastures or cultivated fields. The roofs and spires of prosperous cities and villages are seen here and there among their shade trees, and give a human interest to the lovely landscape. It is not surprising that Whittier found inspiration for the beautiful descriptive passages which occur in every poem which has this river for theme or illustration: —

> "Stream of my fathers! sweetly still
> The sunset rays thy valley fill;
> Poured slantwise down the long defile,
> Wave, wood, and spire beneath them smile."

Here is a description of the scenery of the Merrimac Valley by Mr. Whittier himself, in a review of Rev. P. S. Boyd's "Up and Down the Merrimac," written for a journal with which I was connected, and never reprinted until now: —

"The scenery of the lower valley of the Merrimac is not bold nor remarkably picturesque, but there is a great charm in the panorama of its soft green intervales: its white steeples rising over thick clusters of elms and maples, its neat villages on the slopes of gracefully rounded hills, dark belts of woodland, and blossoming or fruited orchards, which would almost justify the words of one who

formerly sojourned on its banks, that the Merrimac is the fairest river this side of Paradise. Thoreau has immortalized it in his 'Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.' The late Caleb Cushing, who was not by nature inclined to sentiment and enthusiasm, used to grow eloquent and poetical when he spoke of his native river.

RIVER PATH

Brissot, the leader of the Girondists in the French Revolution, and Louis Philippe, who were familiar with its scenery, remembered it with pleasure. Anne Bradstreet, the wife of Governor Bradstreet, one of the earliest writers of verse in New England, sang of it at her home on its banks at Andover; and the lovely mistress of Deer Island, who sees on one hand the rising moon lean above the low sea

horizon of the east, and on the other the sunset reddening the track of the winding river, has made it the theme and scene of her prose and verse."

The visitor who approaches Whittier-Land by the way of Haverhill will find in that city many places of interest in connection with the poet's early life, and referred to in his poems. The Academy for which he wrote the ode

HAVERHILL ACADEMY

sung at its dedication in 1827, when he was a lad of nineteen, and before he had other than district school training, is now the manual training school of the city, and may be found, little changed except by accretion, on Winter Street, near the city hall. As this ode does not appear in any of his collected works, and is certainly creditable as a juvenile production, it is given here. It was sung to the air of "Pillar of Glory:" —

Hail, Star of Science! Come forth in thy splendor,
Illumine these walls — let them evermore be
A shrine where thy votaries offerings may tender,
Hallowed by genius, and sacred to thee.
Warmed by thy genial glow,
Here let thy laurels grow
Greenly for those who rejoice at thy name.
Here let thy spirit rest,
Thrilling the ardent breast,
Rousing the soul with thy promise of fame.

Companion of Freedom! The light of her story,
Wherever her voice at thine altar is known
There shall no cloud of oppression come o'er thee,
No envious tyrant thy splendor disown.
Sons of the proud and free
Joyous shall cherish thee,
Long as their banners in triumph shall wave;
And from its peerless height
Ne'er shall thy orb of light
Sink, but to set upon Liberty's grave.

Smile then upon us; on hearts that have never
Bowed down 'neath oppression's unhallowed control.
Spirit of Science! O, crown our endeavor;
Here shed thy beams on the night of the soul;
Then shall thy sons entwine,
Here for thy sacred shrine,
Wreaths that shall flourish through ages to come,
Bright in thy temple seen,
Robed in immortal green,
Fadeless memorials of genius shall bloom.

Haverhill, although but three miles wide, is ten miles long, and includes many a fertile farm out of sight of city spires, and out of sound of city streets. As Whittier says in the poem "Haverhill:" —

"And far and wide it stretches still,
Along its southward sloping hill,
And overlooks on either hand
A rich and many-watered land.
. . . . . .

And Nature holds with narrowing space,
From mart and crowd, her old-time grace,
And guards with fondly jealous arms
The wild growths of outlying farms.

Her sunsets on Kenoza fall,
Her autumn leaves by Saltonstall
No lavished gold can richer make
Her opulence of hill and lake."

This "opulence of hill and lake" is the especial charm of Haverhill. The two symmetrical hills, named Gold and

MAIN STREET, HAVERHILL
City Hall at the right; Haverhill Bridge in middle distance

Silver, near the river, one above and one below the city proper, are those referred to in "The Sycamores" as viewed by Washington with admiring comment, standing in his stirrups and

"Looking up and looking down
On the hills of Gold and Silver
Rimming round the little town."

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BIRTHPLACE IN WINTER
From hemlocks above brook

Silver Hill is the one with the tower on it. As one takes at the railway station the electric car for the three-mile trip to the Whittier birthplace, two lakes are soon passed on the right. The larger one, overlooked by the stone castle on top of a great hill embowered in trees, is Kenoza — a name signifying pickerel. It was christened by Whittier with the poem which has permanently fixed its

KENOZA

name. The whole lake and the beautiful wooded hills surrounding it, with the picturesque castle crowning one of them, are now included in a public park of which any city might be proud. Our car passes close at hand, on the left, another lake not visible because it is so much above us. This is a singular freak of nature — a deep lake fed by springs on top of a hill. The surface of this lake is far above the tops of most of the houses of Haverhill, and it is but a few rods from Kenoza, which lies almost a hundred feet below. Our road is at middle height between the two, and only a stone's throw from either.

FERNSIDE BROOK, THE STEPPING-STONES

As we approach the birthplace, it is over the northern shoulder of Job's Hill, the summit of which is high above us at the right. This hill was named for an Indian chief of the olden time. We look down at the left into an idyllic valley, and through the trees that skirt a lovely brook catch sight of the ancient farmhouse on a gentle slope which seems designed by nature for its reception. To the west and south high hills crowd closely upon this valley, but to the east are green meadows through which winds, at last at leisure, the brook just released from its tumble among the rocks of old Job's left shoulder. The road by which we have come is comparatively new, and was not in existence when the Whittiers lived here. The old road crosses it close by the brook, which is here bridged. The house faces the brook, and not the road, presenting to the highway the little eastern porch that gives entrance to the kitchen, — the famous kitchen of "Snow-Bound."

The barn is across the road directly opposite this porch. It is now much longer than it was in Whittier's youth, but two thirds of it towards the road is the old part to which the boys tunneled through the snowdrift —

> . . . "With merry din,
> And roused the prisoned brutes within.
> The old horse thrust his long head out,
> And grave with wonder gazed about;
> The cock his lusty greeting said,
> And forth his speckled harem led
> The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,
> And mild reproach of hunger looked;
> The horned patriarch of the sheep,
> Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,
> Shook his sage head with gesture mute,
> And emphasized with stamp of foot."

This is not the original barn of the pioneers, but was built by Whittier's father and uncle Moses in 1821. The ancient barn was not torn down till some years later. It was in what is now the orchard back of the house. There

THE BIRTHPLACE, FROM THE ROAD

Showing eastern porch, gate, bridle-post, and large boulder used as horse-block

used to be, close to the cattle-yard of the comparatively new barn, a shop containing a blacksmith's outfit. This was removed more than fifty years ago, being in a ruinous condition from extreme old age. It had not been so tenderly cared for as was its contemporary of the Stuart times across the road.

Thomas Whittier, the pioneer, did not happen upon this valley upon his first arrival from England, in 1638. Indeed, at that time the settlements had not reached into this then primeval wilderness. He settled first in that part of Salisbury which is now named Amesbury, and while a very young man represented that town in the General Court. The Whittier Hill which overlooks the poet's Amesbury home was named for the pioneer, and not for his great-great-grandson. It is to this day called by Amesbury people Whitcher Hill — as that appears to have been the pronunciation of the name in the olden time. For some reason he removed across the river to Newbury. As a town official of Salisbury, he had occasion to lay out a highway towards Haverhill — a road still in use. He came upon a location that pleased his fancy, and in 1647, at the age of twenty-seven, he returned to the northern side of the river and built a log house on the left bank of Country Brook, about a mile from the location he selected in 1688 for his permanent residence. He lived forty-one years in this log house, and here raised a family of ten children, five of them stalwart boys, each over six feet in height. He was sixty-eight years old when he undertook to build the house now the shrine visited yearly by thousands. In raising its massive oaken frame he needed little help outside his own family. As to the location of the log house, the writer of these pages visited the spot with Mr. Whittier in search of it in 1882. He said that when a boy he used to see traces of its foundation, and hoped to find them again; but more than half a century had passed in the mean time, and our search was unsuccessful. It was on the ridge to the left of the road, quite near the old Country Bridge.

Country Bridge had the reputation of being haunted, when Whittier was a boy, and several of his early uncollected poems refer to this fact. No one who could avoid it ventured over it after dark. He told me that once he determined to swallow his fears and brave the danger. He approached whistling to keep his courage

THE HAUNTED BRIDGE OF COUNTRY BROOK

up, but a panic seized him, and he turned and ran home without daring to look behind. It was in this vicinity that Thomas Whittier built his first house in Haverhill. Further down the stream was Millvale, where were three mills, one a gristmill. This mill and the evil reputation of the bridge are both referred to in these lines from "The Home-Coming of the Bride," a fragment first printed in "Life and Letters:" —

> "They passed the dam and the gray gristmill,
> Whose walls with the jar of grinding shook,
> And crossed, for the moment awed and still,
> The haunted bridge of the Country Brook."

It was the custom of the pioneers, when they had the choice, to select the sites of their homes near the small water powers of the brooks; the large rivers they had not then the power to harness. There were good mill sites on Country Brook below the log house, but probably some other settler had secured them, and Thomas Whittier found in the smaller stream on his own estate a fairly good water power. Fernside Brook is a tributary of Country Brook. Probably this decided the selection of the site for a house which was to be a home for generation after generation of his descendants. The dam recently restored is at the same spot where stood the Whittier mill, and in making repairs some of the timbers of the ancient mill were found. Parts of the original walls of the dam are now to be seen on each side of the brook, but the mill had disappeared long before Whittier was born. Further up the brook were two other dams, used as reservoirs. The lower dam when perfect was high enough to enable the family to bring water to house and barn in pipes.

When entering the grounds, notice the "bridle-post" at the left of the gate, and a massive boulder in which rude steps are cut for mounting a horse led up to its side: —

> "The bridle-post an old man sat
> With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat."

Like all of Whittier's descriptions, this is an exact picture of what he had in mind; for this stone, after a great snowstorm, would assume just this appearance. As to the phrase, "the well-curb had a Chinese roof," I once asked him how this well could have had a roof, as the "long sweep high aloof" would have interfered with it. He stood by the side of the well, and explained that there was no roof, but that there was a shelf on one side of the curb on which to rest the bucket. The snow piled up on this like a Chinese roof. The isolation of the homestead

referred to in the phrase, "no social smoke curled over woods of snow-hung oak," has not been broken in either of the centuries this house has stood. No other house was ever to be seen from it in any direction. And yet neighbors are within a half-mile, only the hills and forests hide their habitations from view. When the wind is right, the bells of Haverhill may be faintly heard, and the roar of ocean after a storm sometimes penetrates as a hoarse murmur in this valley.

In the old days, before these hills were robbed of the oaken growths that crowned their summits, their apparent height was much increased, and the isolation rendered even more complete than now. Sunset came much earlier than it did outside this valley. The eastern hill, beyond the meadow, is more distant and not so high, and so the sunrises are comparatively early. Visitors interested in geology will find this hill an unusually good specimen of an eschar, a long ridge of glacial gravel set down in a meadow through which Fernside Brook curves on its way to its outlet in Country Brook. Job's Hill at the south rises so steeply from the right bank of Fernside Brook, at the foot of the terraced slope in front of the house, that it is difficult for many rods to get a foothold. The path by which the hill was scaled and the stepping-stones by which the brook was crossed are accurately sketched in the poem "Telling the Bees," — a poem, by the way, which originally had "Fernside" for its title: —

> "Here is the place; right over the hill
> Runs the path I took;
> You can see the gap in the old wall still,
> And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook."

Visitors should read the stanzas immediately following this, and note the exactness of the poet's description of the homestead he had in mind. The poem was written more than twenty years after he left Haverhill, and it was many years after that when Mr. Alfred Ordway, in

taking photographs of the place, noticed that it had already been pictured in verse; when he spoke of it to Mr. Whittier, the poet was both surprised and pleased at this, which, he said, was the first recognition of his birthplace. The public is indebted to Mr. Ordway for many other discoveries of the same kind, illustrating Whittier's minute fidelity to nature in his descriptions of scenery.

Let us enter the house by the eastern porch, noting the circular door-stone, which was the millstone that

GARDEN AT BIRTHPLACE

ground the grain of the pioneers, more than a century before Whittier was born. It belonged in the mill on the brook to which reference has been made. The fire which destroyed the roof of the house in November, 1902, did not injure this porch, and there were other parts of the house which were scarcely scorched. These are the original walls, and the handiwork of the pioneers is exactly copied in whatever had to be restored. This was made possible by photographs that had been kept, showing the

width and shape of every board and moulding, inside and outside the house. Here again it is Mr. Ordway, president of the board of trustees having the birthplace in charge, who is to be especially thanked. It is proper here, as I have spoken of the fire, to mention the heroic work of the custodian, Mrs. Ela, and others, who saved every article of the precious souvenirs endangered by the fire, so that nothing was lost.

The kitchen, which occupies nearly the whole northern side of the house, is twenty-six feet long and sixteen wide. The visitor's attention is usually first drawn to the great fireplace in the centre of its southern side. The central chimney was built by the pioneer more than two centuries ago, and it has five fireplaces opening into it. The bricks of the kitchen hearth are much worn, as might be expected from having served so many generations as the centre of their home life. It was around this identical hearth that the family was grouped, as sketched in the great poem which has consecrated this room, and made it a shrine toward which the pilgrims of many future generations will find their way. Here was piled —

> "The oaken log, green, huge and thick,
> And on its top the stout back-stick;
> The knotty forestick laid apart,
> And filled between with curious art
> The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
> We watched the first red blaze appear,
> Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
> On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
> Until the old, rude-furnished room
> Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom."

Here on these very bricks simmered the mug of cider and the "apples sputtered in a row," while through these northern windows the homely scene was repeated on the sparkling drifts in mimic flame. The table now standing between these windows is the same that then stood there, and many of the dishes on the shelves near by are the

family heirlooms occupying their old places. Two of these pieces of china were brought here by Sarah Greenleaf, Whittier's grandmother. The bull's-eye watch over the mantel is a fine specimen of the olden time, and hangs on the identical nail from which uncle Moses nightly suspended his plump timepiece.

But perhaps the article which is most worthy of attention in this room is the desk at the eastern corner. This was the desk of Joseph Whittier, great-grandfather of the poet, and son of the pioneer. On the backs and bottoms of the drawers of this desk are farm memoranda made with chalk much more than a century ago. One item dated in 1798 records that the poet's father made his last excursion to Canada in that year. It was about a century old when the boy Whittier scribbled his first rhymes upon it. By an interesting coincidence he also, in his eighty-fifth year, wrote his very last poem upon it. When the family removed to Amesbury, in 1836, this desk was taken with them, but soon after was replaced by a new one, and this went "out of commission." The new desk was the one on which "Snow-Bound" was written, and this may now be seen at Amesbury. When Mr. Whittier's niece was married, he gave her this old desk, which she took to Portland, where it was thoroughly repaired. When he visited Portland, he wrote many letters and some poems on it. In the summer of 1891, as her uncle proposed to make his home with his cousins, the Cartlands, in Newburyport, his niece had this ancient desk sent there. Mr. Whittier was greatly pleased, upon his arrival, to find in his room the heirloom which was hallowed by so many associations connected not only with his ancestry, but with his own early life. Nearly all of the literary work of his last year was done upon this desk. To his niece he wrote: —

"I am writing at the old desk, which Gertrude has placed in my room, but it seems difficult to imagine myself the boy who used to sit by it and make rhymes. It

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KITCHEN IN BIRTHPLACE

is wonderfully rejuvenated, and is a handsome piece of furniture. It was the desk of my great-grandfather, and seemed to me a wretched old wreck when thee took it to Portland. I did not suppose it could be made either useful or ornamental. I wrote my first pamphlet on slavery, 'Justice and Expediency,' upon it, as well as a great many rhymes which might as well have never been written. I am glad that it has got a new lease of life."

The little room at the western end of the kitchen was "mother's room," its floor two steps higher than that of the larger room, for a singular reason. In digging the cellar the pioneer found here a large boulder it was inconvenient to remove, and wishing a milk room at this corner, he was obliged to make its floor two steps higher than the rest of the cellar. This inequality is reproduced in each story. In this little room the bed is furnished with the blankets and linen woven by Whittier's mother on the loom that used to stand in the open chamber. Her initials "A. H." on some of the pieces show that they date back to her life in Somersworth, N. H. On the wall of this room may be seen the baby-clothes of Whittier's father, made by the grandmother who brought the name of Greenleaf into the family. The bureau in this room is the one that stood there in the olden time. The little mirror that stands on it is the one by which Whittier shaved most of his life. He used it at Amesbury, and possibly his father used it before him at Haverhill.

Mr. Whittier had a great fund of stories of the supernatural that were current in this neighborhood in his youth, and one that had this very kitchen for its scene, he told with much impressiveness. It was the story of his aunt Mercy —

> "The sweetest woman ever Fate
> Perverse denied a household mate."

It was out of this window in the kitchen that she saw the horse and its rider coming down the road, and recognized

the young man to whom she was betrothed. It was out of this window in the porch that she saw them again, as she went to the door to welcome her lover. It was this door she opened, to find no trace of horse or rider. It was to this little room at the other end of the kitchen that she

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WESTERN END OF KITCHEN

View of "mother's room;" the poet was born in a room at the left, beyond the fireplace

went, bewildered and terrified, to waken her sister, who tried in vain to pacify her by saying she had been dreaming by the fire, when she should have been in bed. And it was in this room she received the letter many days later telling her of the death of her lover in a distant city at the hour of her vision.[1] Mr. Whittier told such stories with the air of more than half belief in their truth, especially in his later years, when he became interested in the researches of scientists in the realm of telepathy. He said his aunt was the most truthful of women, and she never doubted the reality of her vision.

The door at the southwestern corner of the kitchen

[1] This story is told more fully in *Life and Letters*, pp. 53, 54.

opens into the room in which the poet was born. This was the parlor, but as the Friends were much given to hospitality, it was often needed as a bedroom, and there was in it a bedstead that could be lifted from the floor and supported by a hook in the ceiling when not in use. In the corners are cabinets containing articles of use and ornament that are genuine relics of the Whittier family. The inlaid mahogany card-table between the front windows was brought to this house just a century ago (1804) by Abigail Hussey, the bride of John Whittier, and placed where it now stands. Like the desk in the kitchen, it has always been in the possession of the family, and was restored to the birthplace by the niece to whom Whittier gave it. In this room are several books that belonged in the small library of Whittier's father, which are mentioned in "Snow-Bound," and described more fully in the rhymed catalogue, a part of which appears in "Life and Letters," p. 46. I here give the full list copied from Whittier's manuscript, for which I am indebted to Miss Sarah S. Thayer, daughter of Abijah W. Thayer, who edited the "Haverhill Gazette," and with whom Whittier boarded while in the Academy. Mr. Thayer had appended to the manuscript these words: "This was deposited in my hands about 1828, by John G. Whittier, who assured me that it was his first effort at versification. It was written in 1823 or 1824, when Whittier was fifteen or sixteen years old."

NARRATIVES

How Captain Riley and his crew
Were on Sahara's desert threw.
How Rollins to obtain the cash
Wrote a dull history of trash.
O'er Bruce's travels I have pored,
Who the sources of the Nile explored.
Malcolm of Salem's narrative beside,
Who lost his ship's crew, unless belied.
How David Foss, poor man, was thrown
Upon an island all alone.

RELIGIOUS

The Bible towering o'er the rest,
Of all the other books the best.
Old Father Baxter's pious call
To the unconverted all.
William Penn's laborious writing,
And the books 'gainst Christians fighting.
Some books of sound theology,
Robert Barclay's "Apology."
Dyer's "Religion of the Shakers,"
Clarkson's also of the Quakers.
Many more books I have read through —
Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" too.
A book concerning John's baptism,
Elias Smith's "Universalism."

JOURNALS, LIVES, &c.

The Lives of Franklin and of Penn,
Of Fox and Scott, all worthy men.
The Lives of Pope, of Young and Prior,
Of Milton, Addison, and Dyer;
Of Doddridge, Fénelon and Gray,
Armstrong, Akenside, and Gay.
The Life of Burroughs, too, I 've read,
As big a rogue as e'er was made;
And Tufts, who, I will be civil,
Was worse than an incarnate devil.

— Written by John G. Whittier.

The books of this library now to be seen are the "Life of George Fox," in two leather-bound volumes, printed in London, 1709, Sewel's "Painful History," printed in 1825, Ellwood's "Drab-Skirted Muse," Philadelphia edition of 1775, and Thomas Clarkson's "Portraiture of Quakerism," New York edition of 1806.

The little red chest near the fireplace is an ancient relic of the family, formerly used for storing linen. The portrait of Whittier over the fireplace is enlarged from a miniature painted by J. S. Porter about 1830, and it is the earliest likeness of the poet ever taken. The original

miniature may be seen at the Amesbury home. The large portrait on the opposite side of the room was painted by Joseph Lindon Smith, an artist of celebrity, who is a relative of Whittier's. Portraits of Whittier's brother, his sisters, his mother, and his old schoolmaster, Joshua Coffin, are shown in this room. The silhouette on the mantelpiece is of aunt Mercy, his mother's unmarried sister. A sampler worked by Lydia Ayer, the girl commemorated in the poem "In School Days," is exhibited in this room. She was a member of the family who were the nearest neighbors of the Whittiers — a family still represented in their ancient homestead, where her grandniece now lives. She died at the age of fourteen.

It was the privilege of the writer to accompany Mr. Whittier when he made his last visit to his birthplace, in late October, 1882. When in this birth-room, he expressed a wish to see again a fire upon its hearth, not for warmth, for it was a warm day, but for the sentiment of it. The elderly woman who had charge of the house said she would have a fire built, and in the mean time we went down to the brook, intending to cross by the stepping-stones he had so often used. But the brook was running full, the stepping-stones were slippery, and Mr. Whittier reluctantly gave up crossing. Then we visited the little burying-ground of the family, where lie the remains of his ancestors. When we returned to the parlor, we found the good woman had brought down a sheet-iron air-tight stove from the attic, set it in the fireplace, and there was a crackling fire in it! I suggested that we could easily remove the stove and have a blaze on the hearth, but Mr. Whittier at once negatived the proposition, saying we must not let the woman know we were disappointed. She had taken much pains to please us, and must not be made aware of her mistake. He was always ready to suffer inconvenience rather than wound the sensibilities of any one.

From the back entry at the western end of the kitchen

ascends the steep staircase down which Whittier, when an infant, was rolled by his sister Mary, two years older than he. She thought if he were well wrapped in a blanket he would not be harmed, and the experiment proved quite successful, thanks to her abundant care in bundling him in many folds. He happily escaped one other peril in his infancy. His parents took him with them on a winter drive to Kingston, N. H. To protect him from the cold, he was wrapped too closely in his blankets, and he came so near asphyxiation that for a time he was thought to be dead. He was taken into a farmhouse they were passing when the discovery was made, and after a long and anxious treatment they were delighted to find he was living.

The rooms in the upper part of the house injured by the recent fire have been perfectly restored to their original condition. At Whittier's last visit here he went into every room, and told stories of the happenings of his youth in each. At the head of the back stairs is a little doorless press, which he pointed out as a favorite play-place of his and his brother's. Here they found room for their few toys, as perhaps three generations of Whittier children had done before them. And it is not unlikely that some of their toys had amused the youth of their grandfather. One of his earliest memories is connected with this little closet, for here he had his first severe twinge of conscience. He had told a lie — no doubt a white one, for it did not trouble him at first — and soon after was watching the rising of a thunder-cloud that was grumbling over the great trees on the western hill near at hand. A bolt descended among the oaks, and the deafening explosion was instantaneous. He saw in it an exhibition of divine wrath over his sin, and obeyed the primal instinct to hide himself. His mother, searching for him some time after the storm had passed, found her repentant little boy almost smothered under a quilt in this closet, and as he confessed his sin, he was tenderly shrived. Here in the open chamber the brothers often slept when visitors

claimed the little western chamber they usually occupied. They would sometimes find, sifted through cracks in the old walls, a little snowdrift on their quilt. The small western room the boys called theirs was the scene of the story Trowbridge has so neatly versified. The elder proposed that as they could lift each other, by lifting in turn they could rise to the ceiling, and there was no knowing how much further if they were out of doors! The prudent lads, to make it easy in case of failure, stood upon the bed in this little room. Trowbridge says: —

> "Kind Nature smiled on that wise child,
> Nor could her love deny him
> The large fulfilment of his plan;
> Since he who lifts his brother man
> In turn is lifted by him."

Boys were boys in those days, and Whittier told us of trying to annoy his younger sister by pretending to hang her cat on this railing to the attic stairs. And girls were girls too; for he told of Elizabeth's frightening two hired men who were occupying the open chamber. They had been telling each other ghost stories after they went to bed; but both asserted that they could not be frightened by such things. From over the door of her room Elizabeth began throwing pins, one at a time, so that they would strike on the floor near the brave men. They were so frightened they would not stay there another night. In the open attic bunches of dried herbs hung from the rafters, and traces of corn selected for seed. On the floor the boys spread their store of nuts "from brown October's wood." Originally the northern side of the roof sloped down to the first story, as was the fashion in the days of the Stuarts. But some years before Whittier's birth this side of the roof was raised, giving much additional chamber room.

Not far from the house, at the foot of the western hill, is the small lot inclosed by a stone wall, to which refer-

ence has been made, that from the earliest settlement was the burying-place of the family. Here lie the remains of Thomas Whittier and those of his descendants who were the ancestors of the poet. A plain granite shaft in the centre of the lot is inscribed with the names of Thomas Whittier and of Ruth Green, his wife; Joseph Whittier and Mary Peaslee, his wife; Joseph Whittier, 2d, and

THE WHITTIER ELM

Sarah Greenleaf, his wife. No headstones mark the several graves. Others of the family were buried here, including Mary Whittier, an aunt of the poet. His father and uncle Moses, originally buried here, were removed to the Amesbury cemetery, when his mother died, in 1857.

Across the road from the house of the nearest neighbors, the Ayers, in a field of the Whittier farm, is an old, immense, and symmetrical tree, labeled "The Whittier

Elm," which the poet's schoolmate, Edmund Ayer, saved from the woodman's axe by paying an annual tribute, at a time when the farm had gone out of the possession of the Whittiers, and while the new proprietors were intent upon despoiling the place of its finest trees. This is the tree referred to in these lines, written in 1862, in the album of Lydia Amanda Ayer (now Mrs. Evans), his schoolmate Lydia's niece : —

> " A dweller where my infant eyes
> Looked out on Nature's sweet surprise,
> Whose home is in the ample shade
> Of the old Elm Tree where I played,
> Asks for her book a word of mine : —
> I give it in a single line :
> Be true to Nature and to Heaven's design ! "

Whittier took us that October day to neighbor Ayer's house, where the brother of little Lydia was still living, who also was a schoolmate of the poet, and they talked of the old times with the greatest relish. The Ayer house occupies the site of a garrison house, built of strong oaken timbers, and used as a house of refuge in the time of the Indian wars. The Whittiers, though close at hand, never availed themselves of its protection, even when Indian faces covered with war-paint peered through the kitchen windows upon the peaceful Quaker family. We were soon joined by another aged schoolmate, Aaron Chase, and with him we went to Corliss Hill, where Whittier showed us the two houses in which he first went to school. They are both now standing, and are dwelling-houses in each of which a room was given up for the district school — one before the house described in " In School Days " was built, and the other while it was being repaired. He had not yet arrived at school age when his sister Mary took him to his first school, kept by his life-long friend, Joshua Coffin, to whom he addressed the poem, " To My Old Schoolmaster." As I happened to be a nephew of Coffin, he told me stories of his first school. It was kept in an

unfinished ell of a farmhouse; but the room had been transformed into a neatly furnished kitchen when we visited it. In the poem referred to he alludes to the quarrels

JOSHUA COFFIN

"Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of State and Church;
Named on history's title-page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage."

To My Old Schoolmaster

of the good man and his tipsy wife heard through "the cracked and crazy wall." He told this story of the tipsy wife: She sent her son for brush to heat her oven. He brought such a nice load that she thought it too bad to waste it in the oven. So she sent her son with it to the

grocery, and he brought back the liquor he received in payment. But this made her short of oven wood, and to eke out her supply of fuel she burned a loose board of the cellar stairs. The next time she had occasion to go to the cellar, she forgot the hiatus she had made and broke her leg. After Mr. Chase left us, Whittier told me that his old schoolmate was a nephew of the last person usually accounted a witch in this neighborhood. She was the wife of Moses Chase of Rocks Village. Her relatives believed her a witch, and one of her nieces knocked her down in the shape of a persistent bug that troubled her. At that moment it happened that the old woman fell and hurt her head. The old lady on one occasion went before Squire Ladd, the blacksmith and Justice of the Peace at the Rocks, and took her oath that she was not a witch.

We next visited the scene of "In School Days," and found some traces of the schoolhouse that have since been obliterated, although a tablet now marks its site. The door-stone over which the scholars "went storming out to playing" was still there, and some of the foundation stones were in place. "Around it still the sumachs" were growing, and blackberry vines were creeping. Mr. Whittier gathered a handful of the red sumach, and took it to Amesbury with him. It remained many days in a vase in his "garden room." Speaking of his boyhood, he said he was always glad when it came his turn to stay at home on First Day. The chaise, driven to Amesbury — nine miles — every First and Fifth Day, fortunately was not of a capacity to take the whole family at once. This gave him an occasional opportunity, much enjoyed, to spend the day musing by the brook, or in the shade of the oaks and hemlocks on the breezy hilltops, which commanded a view unsurpassed for beauty. These hills, which so closely encompass the ancient homestead at the west and south, are among the highest in the county. From them one gets glimpses of the ocean in Ipswich Bay, the undulating hills of Newbury, cultivated to their tops, on the

further side of the Merrimac, the southern ranges of the New Hampshire mountains, and the heights of Wachusett and Monadnock in Massachusetts. Po Hill, in Amesbury, under which stands the Quaker meeting-house where his parents worshiped, shows its great round dome in the east. He never tired of these views, and celebrated

SCENE OF "IN SCHOOL DAYS"

them in many of his poems. He especially dreaded the winter drives to meeting. Buffalo robes were not so plenty in those days as they became a few years later, and our fathers did not dress so warmly as do we. He was so stiffened by cold on some of these drives to Amesbury that he told me "his teeth could not chatter until thawed out." Winter had its compensations, as he has so well shown in "Snow-Bound." But it is noticeable that he does not refer in that poem to the winter drives to meeting.

On one occasion he improved the absence of his parents on a First Day to go nutting. He climbed a tall walnut, and had a fall of about twenty feet which came near being fatal. The Friends did not theoretically hold one day more sacred than another, and yet theirs was the habit of the Puritan community, to abstain from all play as well as from work on the Sabbath, and this fall gave a smart fillip to the young poet's conscience.

This story illustrating Whittier's popularity when a child I did not get from him, but is a legend of the neighborhood. One of their nearest neighbors, a Miss Chase, had a cherry-tree she guarded with the utmost jealousy. No bird could alight on it in cherry time, and no boy approach it, without bringing her to the rescue with a promptness that frightened them. One day she saw a boy in the branches of this precious tree, and issued upon the scene with dire threats. She caught sight of the culprit's face, and instantly changed her tone: "Oh, is it you, Greenleaf? Take all the cherries you want!"

The old homestead was an object of interest as far back as 1842, as is shown by a letter before me, written by Elizabeth Nicholson of Philadelphia, who asks her friend, Elizabeth Whittier, for a picture of it: "When thee come to Philadelphia if thee will bring ever so rough a sketch of the house where Greenleaf was born, for Elizabeth Lloyd to copy for my book, why — we 'll be glad to see thee! I hope for the sake of the picturesque it is a ruin — indeed it must be, for Griswold says it has been in the family a hundred years!" It had then been in the family for over one hundred and fifty years. The book referred to by Miss Nicholson was a manuscript collection of all the verses, published and unpublished, that Whittier had written at that time — a notable collection, now in existence. She had obtained from the poet a preface in verse for this album, which as it has autobiographical material, refers to the scenery of his birthplace, and was never in print, is here given in a version he pre-

pared for another similar album. For this version I am indebted to the collection made by Mary Pillsbury of Newbury, which contains other original poems of Whittier never published : —

A RETROSPECT

O visions of my boyhood! shades of rhymes!
Vain dreams and longings of my early times!
The work of intervals, a ploughboy's lore,
Oft conned by hearthlight when day's toil was o'er;
Or when through roof-cracks could at night behold
Bright stars in circle with pattens of gold;
Or stretched at noon while oaken branches cast
A restful shade, where rippling waters passed;
The ox unconscious panted at my side,
The good dog fondly his young master eyed,
And on the boughs above the forest bird
Alone rude snatches of the measure heard;
The measure that had sounded to me long,
And vain I sought to weave it in a song,
Or trace it, when the world's enchantment first
To longing eye, as kindling dawn's light, burst.
Then flattery's voice, in woman's gentlest tone,
Woke thoughts and feelings heretofore unknown,
And homes of wealth and beauty, wit and mirth,
By taste refined, by eloquence and worth,
Taught and diffused the intellect's high joy,
And gladly welcomed e'en a rustic boy;
Or when ambition's lip of flame and fear
Burned like the tempter's to my listening ear,
And a proud spirit, hidden deep and long,
Rose up for strife, stern, resolute, and strong,
Eager for toil, and proudly looking up
To higher levels for the world, with hope.

In these lines Whittier has told in brief the whole story of his life, from his early dreaming by this brookside and at this hearthstone, to the waking of his political ambitions, and later to his earnest strife to bring up the world "to higher levels."

It happened that the day on which Whittier visited his

birthplace for the last time was toward the close of a spirited political campaign in which Whittier took much interest, as General Butler was a candidate he was opposing. Speaking of Butler reminded him of the pet ox of his boyhood, which had the odd name of "Old Butler," between whose horns he would sit as the animal chewed his cud under the hillside oaks. This was the same ox that, in rushing down one of these steep hills for salt, could not stop because of his momentum, but saved his young master's life by leaping over his head. No doubt this ox was in mind when he wrote the line just quoted, "The ox unconscious panted at my side." One story reminded him of another, and he said this ox was named for another that had its day in a former generation on a neighboring farm.

This is the story he told of the original "Old Butler:" A family named Morse lived not far from here, and included several boys fond of practical joking. The older brothers one day bound the youngest upon the back of the ox, Butler. Frightened by the unusual burden, the animal dashed away to the woods on Job's Hill. The lad was fearfully bruised before he was rescued. Indignant at the treatment he had received, he left home the next morning, and was not heard from until in his old age he returned to the Haverhill farm, and found his brothers still living. They killed for him the fatted calf, and after the supper, as they sat before the great wood fire, they talked over the events of their boyhood. One of the brothers referred to the subject all had hitherto avoided, and said, "Don't you remember your ride upon Old Butler?" "Yes, I *do* remember it," was the answer, "and I don't thank you for bringing it up at this time." The next morning he left the place, and was never again heard from. Mr. Whittier told this story to explain the odd name he had given his ox.

The story has been often told of Garrison's coming out to East Haverhill to find a contributor who had interested

him; and it has been stated that the Quaker lad was called in from work in the field to see the dapper young editor and his lady friend. He once told me that the situation was a bit more awkward for him. It happened that on this eventful morning the young poet had discovered that a hen had stolen her nest under the barn, and he was crawling on his hands and knees, digging his dusty way towards the hen, when his sister Mary came out to summon him to receive city visitors. It was only by her urgent persuasion that he was induced to give up burrowing for the eggs. By making a wide detour, he entered the house without being seen, and in haste effected a change of raiment. In telling the story, he said he put on in his haste a pair of trousers that came scarcely to his ankles, and he must have been a laughable spectacle. He would have felt much more at ease if he had come in just as he was when he emerged from under the barn. Garrison, with the social tact that ever distinguished him, put the shy boy at his ease at once.

After the death of their father, Greenleaf and his brother Franklin for a time worked the farm together, and when in later life they indulged in reminiscences of this agricultural experience, this is a story with which the poet liked to tease his brother: Franklin was sent to swap cows with a venerable Quaker living at considerable distance from their homestead. He came back with a beautiful animal, warranted as he supposed to be a good cow, and he depended upon a verbal warrant from a member of a Society which was justly proud of its reliability in all business transactions. It was soon found that she was worthless as a milker, and Franklin took her back, demanding a cancellation of the bargain because the cow was not as represented. But the old Quaker was ready for him: "What did I tell thee? Did I say she was a *good* cow? No, I told thee she was a *harnsome* cow — and thee cannot deny she *is* harnsome!"

One of Whittier's ancestors was fined for cutting oaks

on the common. When this fact was discovered, he was asked if he would wish this circumstance to be omitted in his biography. "By no means," he said, "tell the whole story. It shows we had some enterprising ancestors, even if a bit unscrupulous."

When Whittier last visited his birthplace, ten years before his death, he was saddened by many evidences he saw that the estate was not being thriftily managed, and expressed the wish to buy and restore the place to something like its condition when it remained in his family. Not one of his near relatives was then so situated as to be able to take charge of it, and his idea of again making it a Whittier homestead was reluctantly given up. When he learned, towards the close of his life, that Mr. Ordway, Mayor Burnham, and other public-spirited citizens of Haverhill, proposed to buy and care for the place, already become a shrine for many visitors, he asked permission to pay whatever might be needed for its purchase. He died before negotiations could be completed, and Hon. James H. Carleton generously bought the homestead, and transferred the proprietorship to a self-perpetuating board of nine trustees, viz.: Alfred A. Ordway, George C. How, Charles Butters, Dudley Porter, Thomas E. Burnham, Clarence E. Kelley, Susan B. Sanders, Sarah M. F. Duncan, and Annie W. Frankle. In the deed of gift the trustees were enjoined "to preserve as nearly as may be the natural features of the landscape; preserve and restore the buildings thereon as nearly as may be in the same condition as when occupied by Whittier; and to afford all persons, at such suitable times and under such proper restrictions as said trustees may prescribe, the right and privilege of access to the same, that thereby the memory and love for the poet and the man may be cherished and perpetuated." Mr. Ordway was made president of the board, and in his hands the office has been no sinecure. His unflagging zeal and his unerring good taste have resulted not only in putting the

ancient house into the perfect order of the olden time, but in fertilizing the wornout fields, and preserving for future ages one of the finest specimens in the country of the colonial farmhouse of New England. Mr. Whittier's niece, to whom he left his house in Amesbury, returned to the birthplace many of the household treasures that were carried from there in 1836. The articles in the house purporting to be Whittier heirlooms may be depended on as genuine.

I do not think that Whittier was ever aware that Harriet Livermore, the "not unfeared, half-welcome guest," of whom he gave such a vivid portrait in "Snow-Bound," returned to America from her travels in the Holy Land at about the time that poem was published, and died the next year, 1867. I have from good authority this curious story of her first reading of those lines which meant so much in a peculiar way to the immortality of her name. She was ill, and called with a prescription at a drugstore in Burlington, N. J. It happened that the druggist was a personal friend of Whittier's — Mr. Allinson, father of the lad for whom the poem "My Namesake" was written. This was in March, 1866, and Whittier had just sent his friend an early copy of his now famous poem. He had not had time to open the book when the prescription was handed him. As it would take considerable time to compound the medicine, he asked the aged lady to take a seat, and handed her the book he had just received to read while waiting. When he gave her the medicine and she returned the book, he noticed she was much perturbed, and was mystified by her exclamation: "This book tells a pack of lies about me!" He naturally supposed she was crazy, both from her remark and from her appearance. It was not until some time later that he learned that his customer was Harriet Livermore herself!

In another New Jersey town was living at the same time another of the "Snow-Bound" characters, — the teacher of the district school, whose name even the poet had for-

gotten when this sketch of him was written. In the last year of his life Whittier recalled that his name was Haskell, but could tell me no more, except that he was from Maine, and was a Dartmouth student. His story is told in "Life and Letters," and is now referred to only to note the curious fact that although he lived until 1876, and was a cultivated man who no doubt was familiar with Whittier's work, yet he was never aware that he had the poet for a pupil, and died without knowing that his own portrait had been drawn by the East Haverhill lad with whom he had played in this old kitchen. I have this from my friend, John Townsend Trowbridge, who was personally acquainted with Haskell in the last years of his life.

It was in 1698, ten years after this house was built, that the Indians in a foray upon Haverhill burned many houses and killed or captured forty persons, including the heroic Hannah Dustin, in whom they caught a veritable tartar. Her statue with uplifted tomahawk stands in front of the City Hall. It is possible that on her return to Haverhill she brought her ten Indian scalps into this kitchen.

Whittier used to tell many amusing stories of his boyhood days. Here is one he heard in the old kitchen of the Whittier homestead at Haverhill, as told by the aged pastor of the Congregational church in the neighborhood, who used to call upon the Quaker family as if they belonged to his parish. These extra-official visits were much prized, especially by the boys, for he told them many a tale of his own boyhood in Revolutionary times. This story of "the power of figures" I can give almost in Whittier's words, as I made notes while he was telling it:

The old clergyman sat by the kitchen fire with his mug of cider and told of his college life. He was a poor student, and when he went home at vacation time, he tramped the long journey on foot, stopping at hospitable farmhouses on the way for refreshment. One evening an old farmer invited him in, and as they sat by the fire, after

a good supper, they talked of the things the student was learning at college. At length the farmer suggested: —

"No doubt you know the power of figures?"

The student modestly allowed he had learned some-

HARRIET LIVERMORE[1]

thing of algebra and some branches of the higher mathematics.

"I know it! I know it! You are just the man I want to see. You know the power of figures! I have lost a cow; now use your power of figures and find her for me."

[1] This picture is reproduced from a drawing by Miss Francesca Alexander in her exquisite volume, *Tuscan Songs*. It is the face of an Italian peasant, but bears so extraordinary a resemblance to Harriet Livermore (as testified by several who knew her) that it is here given as representing her better than any known portrait.

The student disclaimed such power, but it was of no use. The farmer insisted that one who knew the power of figures must be able to locate his cow. Else, of what use to go to college; why not stay at home and find the cows after the manner of the unlearned? So the student decided to quiz a little. He took a piece of chalk and drew crazy diagrams on the floor. The farmer thought he recognized in the lines the roads and fences of the vicinity, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed: —

"You are coming to it! Don't tell me you don't know the power of figures!"

At last, when the poor student had exhausted the power of his invention, he threw down the chalk, and pointing to the spot where it fell, said: —

"Your cow is there!"

He had a good bed, but could not rest easy on it for the thought of how he was to get out of the scrape in the morning, when it would be surely known that his figures had lied. He decided that he would steal off before any of the family had arisen. In the early dawn he was congratulating himself upon having got out of the house unobserved, when he was met at the gate by the old farmer himself, who was leading the cow home in triumph. He had found her exactly where the figures had foretold. Of course the mathematician must go back to breakfast — what was he running off for, after doing such a service by his learning?

They stood again by the cabalistic diagram on the floor of the kitchen.

"You need n't tell me you don't know the power of figures," exclaimed the good man, "for the cow was just there!"

For once, the clergyman said, Satan had done him a good turn.

Nearly all the early letters and poems of Whittier, written before he gave up every selfish ambition and devoted his life to philanthropic work, show how great

was the change that came over his spirit when about twenty-five years of age. Before that time he imagined that the world was treating him harshly, and he was bracing himself for a contest with it, with a feeling that he was surrounded by enemies. His tone was almost invariably pessimistic. After the change referred to, he habitually saw friends on every side, gave up selfish ambitions,

SCENE ON COUNTRY BROOK

and a cheerful optimism pervaded his outlook upon life. The following extract from a letter written in April, 1831, while editing the "New England Review," to a literary lady in New Haven, is in the prevailing tone of what he wrote in the earlier period. This letter has only lately come into my possession, and is now first quoted: —

"Disappointment in a thousand ways has gone over my heart, and left it dust. Yet I still look forward with high anticipations. I have placed the goal of my ambitions high — but with the blessing of God it shall be

reached. The world has at last breathed into my bosom a portion of its own bitterness, and I now feel as if I would wrestle manfully in the strife of men. If my life is spared, the world shall know me in a loftier capacity than *as a writer of rhymes*. [The italics are his own.] There — is not that boasting? — But I have said it with a strong pulse and a swelling heart, and I shall strive to realize it."

In another letter, written at about the same time to the same correspondent, he says: "As for tears, I have not shed anything of the kind since my last flogging under the birchen despotism of the Nadir Shah of our village school. I have sometimes wished I *could* shed tears — especially when angry with myself or with the world. There is an iron fixedness about my heart on such occasions which I would gladly melt away."

From the birthplace to the Amesbury home is a distance of nine miles, traversed by electric cars in less than an hour. Midway is the thriving village of Merrimac, formerly known as West Amesbury. It was at Birchy Meadow in this vicinity that Whittier taught his first and only term of district school, in the winter of 1827–28. The road is at considerable distance from the Merrimac River, and at several points it surmounts hills which afford remarkably fine views of the wide and fertile river valley, with occasional glimpses of the river itself. At Pond Hills, near the village of Amesbury, the landscape presented to view is one of the widest and loveliest in all this region. It is a panorama of the beautifully rounded hills peculiar to this section, with a tidal river winding among them with many a graceful curve. The electric road we have taken is about two miles from the left bank of the river, across which we look to the Newbury hills, cultivated to their tops, with here and there a church spire indicating the location of the distant villages. Every part of this lovely valley has been commemorated in Whittier's writings, prose and verse.

If, instead of the trolley, we take the carriage road from Haverhill along the bank of the river, we soon come to what are left of "the sycamores," planted in 1739 by Hugh Tallant, in front of the Saltonstall mansion. This

THE SYCAMORES

mansion is now occupied by the Haverhill Historical Society, and most of the famous row of "Occidental plane-trees" were cut down many years ago, a sacrifice to street improvement. Three of the ancient trees still stand, and will probably round out the second century of their existence. They are about eighty feet in height, and measure nearly twenty feet around their trunks. Under these trees Washington "drew rein," and Whittier repeats the legend that he said: —

"I have seen no prospect fairer
In this goodly Eastern land."

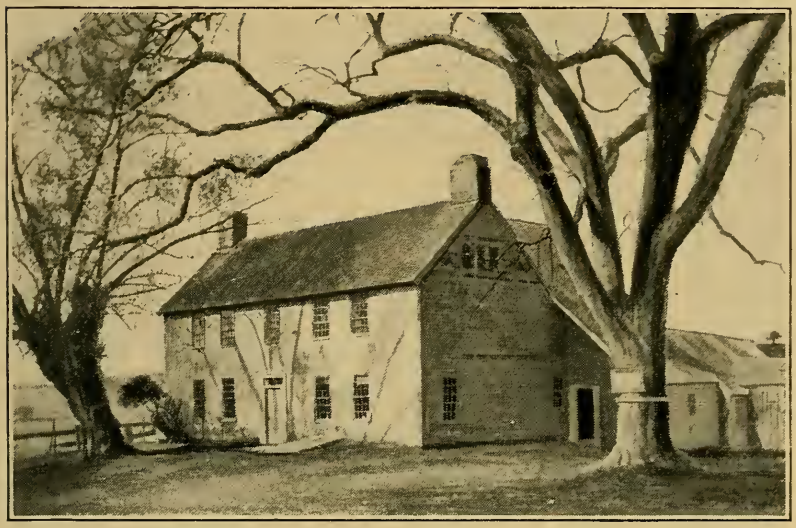
About a mile below on the northeasterly side of Millvale, a hill picturesquely crowned with pines attracts attention. This is the Ramoth Hill immortalized in the lovely poem "My Playmate:" —

"The pines were dark on Ramoth Hill,
Their song was soft and low.
. . . . . .
"And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are moaning like the sea, —
The moaning of the sea of change
Between myself and thee!"

Until recently there has been much doubt as to the location of Ramoth Hill, Whittier himself giving no definite answer when asked in regard to it. Indeed, the poem as originally written had the title "Eleanor," and the hill was given the name of Menahga. But Mr. J. T. Fields, to whom the manuscript was submitted, did not like this name, and Whittier changed it to Ramoth, which suited his editor's taste. Mr. Alfred A. Ordway, the best authority on all matters pertaining to Whittier's allusions to places in this region, has discovered that the name Menahga was given to this particular hill in Haverhill by Mrs. Mary S. West of Elmwood, one of a family all the members of which were dear to Whittier from his boyhood to the close of his life. A letter of Whittier's to Mrs. West has come to light, written about the time this poem was composed, in which he commends the selection of the name of this hill, and intimates that he shall use it in a poem.

On the Country Bridge road, leading from the birthplace to Rocks Village, is an ancient edifice, known as the "Old Garrison House," which is of interest to Whittier-Land pilgrims because it was the home of Whittier's great-grandmother, Mary Peaslee, who brought Quakerism into the Whittier family. Thomas Whittier, the pioneer, did

not belong to the Society of Friends, though favorably disposed toward the sect. His youngest son, Joseph, brought the young Quakeress into the family, and their descendants for several generations, down to the time of the poet, belonged to the sect founded by her father's friend, George Fox. Joseph Peaslee built this house with bricks brought from England before 1675. As it was one of the largest and strongest houses in the town, in the time of King Philip's war it was set apart by the town authorities as a house of refuge for the families of the



OLD GARRISON HOUSE (PEASLEE HOUSE)

neighborhood, and as a rallying point for the troops kept on the scout. There are many port-holes through its thick walls.

A little farther on we come to Rocks Village, pictured so perfectly by Whittier in his poem "The Countess," that it will be at once recognized: —

> "Over the wooded northern ridge,
> Between its houses brown,
> To the dark tunnel of the bridge
> The street comes straggling down."

The bridge across the Merrimac at this point was a covered and gloomy structure at the time this poem was written. It has since been partially remodeled, and many of the houses of the "stranded village," then brown and paintless, have received modern improvements. But there is enough of antiquity still clinging to the place to make it recognizable from Whittier's lines. This was the market to which the Whittiers brought much of the produce of their farm to barter for household supplies. This was the home of Dr. Elias Weld, the "wise old doctor" of "Snow-Bound," and it was to him "The Countess" was inscribed

ROCKS VILLAGE AND BRIDGE

Home of the Countess was at further end of the bridge, in house now standing, afterward occupied by Whittier's benefactor, Dr. Weld

— the poem which every year brings many visitors hither, for the grave of the Countess is near.

Whittier was still in his teens when this eccentric physician left Rocks Village and removed to Hallowell, Maine, and almost half a century had intervened before he wrote that remarkable tribute to the friend and benefactor of his youth, which is found in the prelude to "The

RIVER VALLEY, NEAR GRAVE OF COUNTESS

" For, from us, ere the day was done
The wooded hills shut out the sun.
But on the river's further side
We saw the hill-tops glorified."
THE RIVER PATH

Countess." The good old man died at Hudson, Ohio, a few months after the publication of the lines that meant so much to his fame, and it is pleasant to know that they consoled the last hours of his long life. Whittier did not know whether or not the benefactor of his boyhood was living in 1863, when he wrote the poem, as is shown in the lines: —

" I know not, Time and Space so intervene,
Whether, still waiting with a trust serene,
Thou bearest up thy fourscore years and ten,
Or, called at last, art now Heaven's citizen."

And yet they were in correspondence in the previous year, as is shown by the fact that I find in an old album of Whittier's a photograph labeled by him " Dr. Weld," and this photograph, I am assured by Mrs. Tracy, a grand-niece of Weld, was taken when he was ninety years of age. I think it probable that the sending of this photo-

graph by the aged physician put Whittier in mind to write his Rocks Village poem, with the tribute of remembrance and affection contained in its prelude. As to the ancient sulky which —

> "Down the village lanes
> Dragged, like a war-car, captive ills and pains,"

it was a chaise with a white canvas top, and the doctor always dressed in gray, and drove a sober white horse.

DR. ELIAS WELD, AT THE AGE OF NINETY

I have seen a letter of Whittier's written to Dr. Weld, then at Hallowell, in March, 1828, in which he says: "I am happy to think that I am not forgotten by those for whom I have always entertained the most sincere regard. I recollect perfectly well that (on one occasion in particular) after hearing thy animated praises of Milton and

Thomson I attempted to bring a few words to rhyme and measure; but whether it was poetry run mad, or, as Burns says, 'something that was rightly neither,' I cannot now ascertain; I am certain, however, that it was in a great measure owing to thy admiration of those poets that I ventured on that path which their memory has hallowed, in pursuit of — I myself hardly know what — time alone must determine. . . . I am a tall, dark-complexioned, and, I am sorry to say, rather ordinary-looking fellow, bashful, yet proud as any poet should be, and believing with the honest Scotchman that 'I hae muckle reason to be thankful that I am as I am.'" [1] It is of interest further to state that Whittier's life-long friend and co-laborer in the anti-slavery field, Theodore D. Weld, was a nephew of "the wise old doctor." Also that another nephew, who was adopted as a son by the childless physician, was named "Greenleaf" for the young poet in whom he took so much interest. The grave of the Countess in the cemetery near Rocks Village is now better cared for than when the poem was written. This is not the cemetery referred to in the poem "The Old Burying-Ground," which is near the East Haverhill church.

[1] This letter has been published in full in a limited edition, by Mr. Goodspeed, together with a New Year's Address referred to in it as having given offense to some of the citizens of Rocks Village. A portion of this Address (which appeared in the *Haverhill Gazette*, January 5, 1828) is given in *Life and Letters*, pp. 62, 63. The lines that seem to have given offense are these: —

> "*Rocks* folks are wide awake — their old bridge tumbled
> Some years ago, and left them all forsaken;
> But they have risen, tired of being humbled,
> And the first steps towards a new one taken.
> They 're all alive — their trade becomes more clever,
> And mobs and riots flourish well as ever."

Thirty-five years later, perhaps remembering the offense he had given in his youth by his portrayal of the *liveliness* of the place, he shaded his picture in *The Countess* with a different pencil, and we have a "stranded village" sketched to the life.

In 1844, Whittier was the Liberty Party candidate for representative to the General Court from Amesbury, running against Whig and Democratic candidates. A majority vote being required there were five attempts to elect, in each of which Whittier steadily gained, and it was at last evident he would be elected at the next trial. Whereupon the two opposing parties united, and the town voted to have *no* representative for 1845. This was at the time of the agitation against the annexation of Texas, and Whittier was very anxious to be elected. Towns then paid the salaries of their representatives, and could, if they chose, remain unrepresented.

At his last visit to his birthplace, in 1882, Whittier called my attention to the millstone which serves as a step at the door of the eastern porch, to which reference is made on page 18. It was soon after this that he wrote his fine poem "Birchbrook Mill," one stanza of which was evidently inspired by noticing this doorstep, and by memories of the mill of his ancestors on Fernside Brook, the site of which he had so recently visited:

"The timbers of that mill have fed
Long since a farmer's fires;
His doorsteps are the stones that ground
The harvest of his sires."

AMESBURY

II

AMESBURY

Following down the left bank of the river, we come, near the village of Amesbury, to a sheltered nook between the steep northern hill and the broad winding river, known as "Pleasant Valley." At some points there is scant room for the river road between the high bluff and the water; at others a wedge of fertile intervale pushes back the steep bank. The comfortable houses of an ancient Quaker settlement are perched and scattered along this road in picturesque fashion. It was a favorite walk of Whittier and his sister, and it is commemorated in "The River Path," —

> "Sudden our pathway turned from night;
> The hills swung open to the light;
>
> "Through their green gates the sunshine showed,
> A long, slant splendor downward flowed.
>
> "Down glade and glen and bank it rolled;
> It bridged the shaded stream with gold;
>
> "And, borne on piers of mist, allied
> The shadowy with the sunlit side!"

When Mr. Whittier returned to Amesbury from the last visit to his birthplace, referred to in the preceding chapter, it was by the road passing the Old Garrison House, the Countess' grave, Rocks Village, and Pleasant Valley. He pointed out each feature of the scene that reminded him of earlier days. When we came to Pleasant Valley, he stopped the carriage at a picturesque wooded knoll between the road and the river, and said that here he

used to come with his sister to gather harebells. It was so late in the season that every other flower by the roadside had been killed by frost; even the goldenrod was more sere than yellow. But the harebells were fresh in their delicate beauty, and he gathered a handful of them which lighted up his "garden room" for several days. I remember that on this occasion an effect referred to in "The River Path" was reproduced most beautifully. The setting sun, hidden to us, illuminated the hills of Newbury: —

> "A tender glow, exceeding fair,
> A dream of day without its glare.
>
> "With us the damp, the chill, the gloom:
> With them the sunset's rosy bloom;
>
> "While dark, through willowy vistas seen,
> The river rolled in shade between."

To a friend in Brooklyn who inquired in regard to the origin of this poem, Mr. Whittier wrote: "The little poem referred to was suggested by an evening on the Merrimac River, in company with my dear sister, who is no longer with me, having crossed the river (as I fervently hope) to the glorified hills of God."

"The Last Walk in Autumn" is another poem inspired by the scenery of this locality. At the lower end of this valley, near the mouth of the Powow, on the edge of the bluff overlooking the Merrimac, Goody Martin lived more than two hundred years ago, and the cellar of her house was still to be seen when, in 1857, Whittier first told the story of "The Witch's Daughter," the poem now known as "Mabel Martin." She was the only woman who suffered death on a charge of witchcraft on the north side of the Merrimac. One other aged woman in this village was imprisoned, and would have been put to death, but for the timely collapse of the persecution. She was the wife of Judge Bradbury, and lived on the Salisbury side of the Powow. In his ballad Whittier traces the path he used to

take towards the Goody Martin place, as was his custom in many of his ballads. One who desires to take this path can enter upon it at the Union Cemetery, where the poet is buried. Follow the "level tableland" he describes towards the Merrimac, looking down at the left into the

CURSON'S MILL, ARTICHOKE RIVER

deep and picturesque valley of the Powow, — a charming view of its placid, winding course after it has made its plunge of eighty feet over a shoulder of Po Hill, — until you

> . . . "see the dull plain fall
> Sheer off, steep-slanted, ploughed by all
> The seasons' rainfalls,"

and you look down upon the broad Merrimac seeking "the wave-sung welcome of the sea." Find a path winding down the bluff facing the river, half-way down to the hat factory which is close to the water, and you are upon the location of Goody Martin's cottage. But no trace is now to be seen of "the cellar, vine overrun" which the poet describes.

I visited the spot with the poet on the October day before referred to, and noted the felicity of his descriptions of the locality. It is near the river, but high above

it, and one looks *down* upon the tops of the willows on the bank: —

> "And through the willow-boughs *below*
> She saw the rippled waters shine."

Opposite Pleasant Valley, on the Newbury side of the river, are "The Laurels," "Curson's Mill," and the mouth of the Artichoke, celebrated in several poems. In June, when the laurels are in bloom, this shore is well worth visiting for its natural beauties, as well as for the association of Whittier's frequent allusion to it in prose as well as verse. It was for the "Laurel Party," an annual excursion of his friends to this shore, that he wrote the poems, "Our River," "Revisited," and "The Laurels." In "June on the Merrimac" he sings: —

> "And here are pictured Artichoke,
> And Curson's bowery mill;
> And Pleasant Valley smiles between
> The river and the hill."

In the stanza preceding this he takes a view down the Merrimac, past Moulton's Hill in Newbury, — an eminence commanding one of the finest views on the river, formerly crowned with a castle-like structure occupied for several years as the summer residence of Sir Edward Thornton, — to the great bend the river makes in passing its last rocky barrier at Deer Island. The Hawkswood oaks are a magnificent feature of the scene. This estate, on the Amesbury side of the river, was formerly occupied by Rev. J. C. Fletcher, of Brazilian fame.

> "The Hawkswood oaks, the storm-torn plumes
> Of old pine-forest kings,
> Beneath whose century-woven shade
> Deer Island's mistress sings."

The Merrimac, beautiful as are its banks along its entire course, nowhere presents more picturesque scenery than where it passes through the deep valley it has worn

for itself between the hills of Amesbury and Newbury, and especially where its tidal current is parted by the perpendicular cliffs of Deer Island. At this point the quaint old chain bridge, built about a century ago, spans the stream. This island is the home of Harriet Prescott Spofford, who is referred to in the stanza just quoted. About forty years ago, it was proposed to build a summer hotel on this island, which is four or five miles from the mouth of the Merrimac. I have found among Mr. Whittier's papers an unfinished poem, protesting against what he considered a desecration of this spot which always

DEER ISLAND AND CHAIN BRIDGE

had a great charm for him. It is likely that the reason why this poem was never finished or published was because the project of building a hotel was abandoned. I have taken the liberty to give as a title for it "The Plaint of the Merrimac." As it was written in almost undecipherable hieroglyphics, some of the words are conjectural: —

"I heard, methought, a murmur faint,
Our River making its complaint;
Complaining in its liquid way,
Thus it said, or seemed to say:

"'What 's all this pother on my banks —
Squinting eyes and pacing shanks —
Peeping, running, left and right,
With compass and theodolite?

"'Would they spoil this sacred place?
Blotch with paint its virgin face?
Do they — is it possible —
Do they dream of a hotel?

"'Match against my moonlight keen
Their tallow dip and kerosene?
Match their low walls, plaster-spread,
With my blue dome overhead?

"'Bring their hotel din and smell
Where my sweet winds blow so well,
And my birches dance and swing,
While my pines above them sing?

"'This puny mischief has its day,
But Nature's patient tasks alway
Begin where Art and Fashion stopped,
O'ergrow, and conquer, and adopt.

"'Still far as now my tide shall flow,
While age on age shall come and go,
Nor lack, through all the coming days,
The grateful song of human praise.'"

Before the chain bridge was built, a ferry was maintained at the mouth of the Powow, and here Washington crossed the river at his last visit to New England. It is said that a French ship lay at the wharf near the ferry, and displayed the French flag over the American because of the French feeling against the policy of Washington's administration. Washington refused to land until the obnoxious flag was lowered to its proper place.

It was a one-story cottage on Friend Street, Amesbury, to which the Whittiers came in July, 1836 — a cottage with but four rooms on the ground floor, and a chamber in the attic. The sum paid for this cottage, with about

an acre of land, was twelve hundred dollars. The Haverhill farm was sold for three thousand dollars. Accustomed to the comparatively large ancestral home at Haverhill, it is no wonder that there was at first a feeling of homesickness, as is evidenced in the diary kept by Elizabeth. This feeling was naturally intensified by the prolonged absences of her brother, who from 1836 to 1840 was away from home most of the time, engaged with his duties as secretary of the anti-slavery society in New York, and as editor of the "Pennsylvania Freeman" in Philadelphia. During these years, the only occupants of the cottage were Whittier's mother, his sister Elizabeth, and his aunt Mercy, except when his frequent illnesses, and his interest in the political events of the North Essex congressional district,

THE WHITTIER HOME, AMESBURY

called him home. But in 1840, his residence in Amesbury became permanent. At about this time he made the tour of the country with the English philanthropist, Joseph Sturge, who noticed his straitened circumstances, and out of the largeness of his heart, in a most delicate way, not

only gave him financial assistance at the time, but seven years later enabled him to build a two-story ell to the cottage, and add a story to the eastern half of the original structure. A small ell of one story, occupying part of the space of the present "garden room," was built by Mr. Whittier when he bought the cottage in 1836, and this was aunt Mercy's room. At the later enlargement of the house this small room was lengthened, and a chamber built over it. In the lower floor of this enlarged ell is the room which has ever since been known as the "garden room," because it was built into the garden, and a much prized fruit tree was sacrificed to give it place. The chamber over this room was occupied by Elizabeth until her death in 1864, and after that by Mr. Whittier.

While repairs were making in this part of the house in the summer of 1903, a package of old letters was found in the wall, bearing the date of 1847, the year when the enlargement was made. One of them reveals the source of the money required for the improvement. It was from Lewis Tappan of New York, the financial backbone of the anti-slavery society, inclosing a check for arrears of salary due Whittier for editorial work. Mr. Tappan writes: "I will ask the executive committee to raise the compensation. I wish we could pay you according to the real value of your productions, rather than according to their length. . . . Inclosed is a check for one hundred dollars. Mr. Sturge authorizes me to draw on him for one thousand dollars at any time when you and I should think it could be judiciously invested in real estate for your family. I can procure the money in a week by drawing on him. When you have made up your mind as to the investment, please let me know."

At this time the poet was feeling the pinch of real poverty and was living in a little one-story cottage that gave him no room for a study, and no suitable chamber for a guest. It was at this time that he received the letter which contained not only a check for overdue salary, but a pro-

mise of a gift of one thousand dollars from his generous English friend, Joseph Sturge. The result of this beneficence was the building of the "garden room," to which thousands of visitors come from all parts of this and other countries, because in it were written "Snow-Bound," "The

JOSEPH STURGE, THE ENGLISH PHILANTHROPIST

"The very gentlest of all human natures
He joined to courage strong."
IN REMEMBRANCE OF JOSEPH STURGE

Eternal Goodness," and most of the poems of Whittier's middle life and old age. Mr. Sturge had sent Whittier six years earlier a draft for one thousand dollars, intending it should be used by him in traveling for his health. But Whittier had given most of this toward the support of an anti-slavery paper in New York. Two years later the same generous friend offered to pay all his expenses

if he would come to England as his guest, an offer he was obliged to decline. A portrait of Sturge is appropriately placed in this room. Tappan's letter was written April 21, 1847, and the addition to the cottage was built in the summer of that year. The whole expense of the improvement was no doubt covered by Sturge's gift. Other interesting letters of the same period were included in the package in the wall.

In a drawer of the desk is a most remarkable album of autographs of public men, presented to Mr. Whittier on his eightieth birthday, by the Essex Club. It is a tribute to the poet signed by every member of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the Supreme Court of the United States, the Governor, ex-Governors, and Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and all the members of the Essex Club ; also, many distinguished citizens, such as George Bancroft (who adds to his autograph "with special good wishes to the coming octogenarian"), Robert C. Winthrop, Frederick Douglass, and J. G. Blaine. An eloquent speech of Senator Hoar, who suggested this unique tribute, is engrossed in the exquisite penmanship of a colored man, to whom was intrusted the ornamental pen-work of the whole volume. The congressional signatures were obtained by Congressman Coggswell of the Essex district. It is noticeable that no Southern member declined to sign this tribute to one so identified with the anti-slavery movement.

The "garden room" remains almost precisely as when occupied by the poet — the same chairs, open stove, books, pictures, and even wall-paper and carpet, remaining in it as he placed them. In the north window the flowers pressed between the plates of glass are those on receipt of which he wrote "The Pressed Gentian." By the desk is the cane he carried for more than fifty years, made of wood from his office in Pennsylvania Hall, burned by a pro-slavery mob in 1838. This is the cane for which he wrote the poem "The Relic:" —

"And even this relic from thy shrine,
O holy Freedom! hath to me
A potent power, a voice and sign
To testify of thee;
And, grasping it, methinks I feel
A deeper faith, a stronger zeal."

He had many canes given him, some valuable, but this plain stick was the only one he ever carried. With this cane may be seen one made of oak from the cottage of

THE "GARDEN ROOM," AMESBURY HOME

Barbara Frietchie — not, as was erroneously stated in the biography, a cane carried by the patriotic Barbara. The portraits he hung in this room are of Garrison, Thomas Starr King, Emerson, Longfellow, Sturge, "Chinese" Gordon, and Matthew Franklin Whittier. There is also a fine picture of his birthplace, a water-color sent him by Bayard Taylor from the most northern point in Norway, and a picture, also sent by Bayard Taylor, of the Rock in El Ghor, on receipt of which the poem of that title was written. The Norway picture was painted by Mrs.

Taylor, and represents the surroundings of the northernmost church in the world. The mirror in this room is an heirloom of the Whittier family, dating at least a century before the birth of the poet. The little table under it is almost equally old.

The album containing the likeness of Dr. Weld has also a photograph under which Whittier has written "Mary E. S. Thomas," and this has a special interest, as it is a portrait of his relative, schoolmate, and life-long friend, Mary Emerson Smith, who became the wife of Judge Thomas of Covington, Ky. She was a granddaughter of Captain Nehemiah Emerson, who fought at Bunker Hill, was an officer in the army of Washington, serving at Valley Forge and at the surrender of Burgoyne, and her grandmother was Mary Whittier — a cousin of the poet's father, whom Whittier used to call "aunt Mary." For a time, when in his teens, he stayed at Captain Emerson's, and went to school from there, making himself useful in doing chores. Mary Smith, then a young girl, passed much of her time at her grandfather's, and later was a fellow-student of Whittier's at the Academy. I think there is now no impropriety in stating that it is to her that the poem "Memories" refers.[1] She was living at the time when the biography of Whittier was written, and for that reason her name was not given, but only a veiled reference in "Life and Letters," as at page 276. During many years of her widowhood she spent the summer months in New England, and occasionally met Mr. Whittier at the mountains. They were in friendly correspondence to the close of his life. She survived him

[1] It is of curious interest that although the poem *Memories* was first published in 1841, the description of the "beautiful and happy girl" in its opening lines is identical with that of one of the characters in *Moll Pitcher*, published nine years earlier, and I have authority for saying that Mary Smith was in mind when that portrait was drawn. Probably the reason why Whittier never allowed *Moll Pitcher* to be collected was because he used lines from it in poems written at later dates.

MARY EMERSON (SMITH) THOMAS

several years. It has been suggested with some show of probability that it is a memory of the days they spent together at her grandfather's that is embodied in the poem "My Playmate." At the time when this poem was written she was living in Kentucky.

"She lives where all the golden year
Her summer roses blow;
The dusky children of the sun
Before her come and go."

But this poem, like others of Whittier's, is probably a composite of memories and largely imaginative, as is shown in what is elsewhere said about the localities of Ramoth Hill and Folly Mill.

In the "garden room" also is a miniature on ivory of

a beautiful girl of seventeen, crowned with roses. This is Evelina Bray of Marblehead, a classmate of Whittier's at the Academy in the year 1827, when this portrait was painted. But for adverse circumstances, the school acquaintance which led to a warm attachment between them might have resulted in marriage. But the case was hopeless from the first. He was but nineteen years old, and

EVELINA BRAY, AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN

she seventeen. On both sides the families opposed the match. Among the Quakers marriage "outside of society" was not to be thought of in those days; in his case it would mean the breaking up of a family circle dependent on him, and a severance from his loved mother and sister. This same reason prevented the ripening of other attach-

ments in later life ; for in each case his choice would have been "out of society." Two or three years after they parted at the close of an Academy term, he walked from Salem to Marblehead before breakfast on a June morning, to see his schoolmate. He was then editing the "American Manufacturer," in Boston. She could not invite him in, and they walked to the old ruined fort, and sat on the rocks overlooking the beautiful harbor. This meeting is commemorated in three stanzas of one of the loveliest of his poems, "A Sea Dream" — a poem, by the way, not as a whole referring to Marblehead or to the friend of his youth. But I have good authority for the statement that these three stanzas refer directly to the Marblehead incident. All who are familiar with the locality will recognize it in these verses : —

WHITTIER, AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-TWO

"The waves are glad in breeze and sun ;
The rocks are fringed with foam ;
I walk once more a haunted shore,
A stranger, yet at home,
A land of dreams I roam.

"Is this the wind, the soft sea-wind
That stirred thy locks of brown ?
Are these the rocks whose mosses knew
The trail of thy light gown,
Where boy and girl sat down ?

"I see the gray fort's broken wall,
The boats that rock below ;

And, out at sea, the passing sails
We saw so long ago
Rose-red in morning's glow."

With a single exception, these schoolmates did not meet again for more than fifty years, and Whittier was never aware of this exception. In middle life, when the poet was editing the "Pennsylvania Freeman," and Miss Bray was engaged with Catherine Beecher in educational work, they once happened to sit side by side in the pew of a Philadelphia church, but he left without recognizing her, and she was too shy to speak to him. I had the story from a lady who as a little girl sat in the pew with them, and knew them both. Miss Bray married an Englishman named Downey, and in a romantic way[1] Mr. Whittier discovered her address. Mr. Downey was an evangelist making a crusade in the great cities against Romanism, and met his death from wounds received in facing a New York mob. Whittier, supposing he was poor, and that his schoolmate was having a hard time, sent Downey money without her knowledge. She accidentally discovered this and returned the money. In her widowhood she occasionally corresponded with Mr. Whittier, who induced her to come to the reunion of his schoolmates in 1885, more than fifty years after their parting at Marblehead, and more than forty years after the chance meeting in Phila-

[1] This is how it happened: Mr. Downey saw a newspaper item to the effect that Mrs. S. F. Smith was a classmate of Whittier's. He knew that his wife was a classmate of Mrs. Smith, and "put this and that together." Without saying anything to her about it, he sent a tract of his to Whittier, and with it a note about his work as an evangelist; in a postscript he said, "Did you ever know Evelina Bray?" Whittier wrote a criticism of the tract, which was against Colonel Ingersoll, in which he said, "It occurs to me to say that in thy tract there is hardly enough charity for that unfortunate man, who, it seems to me, is much to be pitied for his darkness of unbelief." He added as a postscript, "What does *thee* know about Evelina Bray?" Downey replied that she was his wife, but did not let her know of this correspondence, or of his receipt of money from her old schoolmate. He was not poor, only eccentric.

delphia. At this reunion she gave him the miniature reproduced in our engraving, which was returned to her after Whittier's death. When she died it went to another schoolmate, the wife of Rev. Dr. S. F. Smith, author of

EVELINA BRAY DOWNEY

our national hymn. From her it came to Whittier's niece, and is now kept in the drawer where the poet originally placed it. With it is the first portrait ever taken of Whittier — it being painted by the same artist (J. S. Porter) two or three years after the girl's miniature, while he was editing the "Manufacturer."

Here is an extract from a note Whittier sent Mrs. Downey soon after the reunion: "Let me thank thee for the picture thee so kindly left with me. The sweet, lovely girl face takes me back to the dear old days, as I look at it. I wish I could give thee something half as valuable in return." The portrait of Mrs. Downey at the age of eighty, here given, is from a photograph she contributed to an album presented to Whittier by his schoolmates of 1827, after the reunion of 1885. Rev. Dr. S. F. Smith attended this reunion in place of his wife, who was then an invalid, and he wrote to his wife this account of the appearance of her old schoolmate at that meeting: "She looked, O so *distingué*, in black silk, with a white muslin veil, reaching over the silver head and down below the shoulders. Just as if she were a Romish Madonna, who had stepped out from an old church painting to hold an hour's communion with earth."

I was in correspondence with Mrs. Downey during the last years of her life, but she would not give me permission to call upon her, and the reason given was that I had seen the miniature, and she preferred to be remembered by that. She was very shy about telling of her early acquaintance with Whittier, and whatever I could learn was by indirection. For instance, I obtained the Marblehead story by her sending me a copy of Whittier's poems which he had given her, and she had drawn a line around the stanzas quoted above. No word accompanied the book. Of course I guessed what she meant, and asked if my guess was correct. She replied "Yes," and no more. Whittier said he had the Captain Ireson story from a schoolmate who came from Marblehead. I asked her if she, as the only Marblehead schoolmate, was the person referred to, and received an emphatic "No." To an intimate friend she once said that during her early acquaintance with Whittier it seemed as if the devil kept whispering to her, "He is only a shoemaker!"

The apartment now used as a reception room was the

kitchen of the original cottage, and has the large fireplace and brick oven that were universal in houses built a century ago. A small kitchen was later built as an ell, and this central room became the dining room, remaining so as long as Mr. Whittier lived. In the reception room is a large bookcase filled with a part of the poet's library, exactly as when he was living here. His books overrun all the rooms in the house, and many are packed in closets. The large engraving of Lincoln over the mantel is an artist's proof, and was placed there by Whittier forty years ago. An ancient mirror in this room, surmounted by a gilt eagle, was broken by a lightning stroke in September, 1872. The track of the electrical current may still be seen in the blackening of a gilt moulding in the upper left corner. The broken glass fell over a member of the family sitting under it, and Whittier himself, who was standing near the door of the "garden room," was thrown to the floor. All in the house were stunned and remained deafened for several minutes, but no one was seriously injured. Up to that time the house had been protected by lightning rods; but Mr. Whittier now had them removed, and refused to have them replaced, though much solicited by agents. In revenge, one of the persistent brotherhood issued a circular having a picture of this house with a thunderbolt descending upon it, as an awful warning against neglect! He had the impudence to emphasize his fulmination by printing a portrait of the poet, who, it was intimated, would yet be punished for defying the elements.

The old parlor, the principal room of the original cottage, has suffered no change in the several remodelings of the house. The beams in the corners show a frame of the olden style — for the cottage had been built many years when the Whittiers came here. The clear pine boards in the dado are two feet in width. In this room are placed many memorials of the poet of interest to visitors. What to him was the most precious thing in the house is the por-

trait of his mother over the mantel — a work of art that holds the attention of the most casual visitor. The likeness to her distinguished son is remarked by all. One sees strength of character in the beautiful face, and a dignity that is softened by sweetness and serenity of spirit. The plain lace cap, white kerchief, drab shawl, and folded hands typify all the Quaker virtues that were preëminently hers.

On the opposite wall is the crayon likeness of Elizabeth, the dearly loved sister, so tenderly apostrophized in "Snow-Bound:" —

> "I cannot feel that thou art far,
> Since near at need the angels are;
> And when the sunset gates unbar,
> Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
> And, white against the evening star,
> The welcome of thy beckoning hand?"

When she died, in 1864, her friend, Lucy Larcom, had this excellent portrait made and presented it to the bereaved brother, and it has hung on this wall nearly forty years. All the other members of the "Snow-Bound" family are here represented by portraits, except the father and uncle Moses, of whom no likenesses exist, save as found in the poet's lines. The Hoit portrait of Whittier, painted when he was about forty years of age, was kept out of sight in a seldom-used chamber, while the poet was living, for he allowed no picture of himself to be prominently displayed. The portrait of his brother was painted when he was about forty years of age. A small photograph of his older sister, Mary Caldwell, is shown, and a silhouette of aunt Mercy; also a portrait of his brother's daughter, Elizabeth (Mrs. Pickard), who was a member of his household for twenty years, and to whom he left this house and its contents by his will. Her son Greenleaf, to whom when four years of age his granduncle inscribed the poem "A Name," now resides here.

In this parlor is the desk on which "Snow-Bound" was written, also "The Tent on the Beach" and other poems of

this period. The success of these poems enabled him to buy a somewhat better desk, now to be seen in the "garden room," where this desk formerly stood. In this desk are presentation copies of many books, with the autographs of their authors — Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria

MRS. PICKARD

Child, Miss Mitford, Julia Ward Howe, John Hay, T. B. Aldrich, and others. Here also is the diary kept by Elizabeth Whittier, in the years 1835–37, covering the period of the removal from Haverhill to Amesbury. Of antiquarian interest is an account-book of the Whittier family, from 1786 to 1800, going into minute details of household expenses, and containing many times repeated the autographs of Whittier's grandfather, his father, and his uncles Moses and Obadiah, who recorded their annual settlements of accounts in this book. Near the desk are bound

volumes of papers edited by Whittier — the "New England Review" of 1830, the "Pennsylvania Freeman" of 1840, and the "National Era" of 1847–50. These contain much of his prose and verse never collected. The Rogers group of statuary representing Whittier, Beecher, and Garrison listening to the story of a fugitive slave girl, who holds an infant in her arms, is in the corner of the room, where it has been for about thirty years. The garden, in the care of which Mr. Whittier took much pleasure, comprises about one half acre of land. He had peach, apple, and pear trees — but the peaches gave out and were not renewed. He also raised grapes, quinces, and small fruit in abundance. The rosebush he prized as his mother's favorite is still flourishing, as are also the fine magnolia, laburnum, and cut-leaved birch of his planting. The ash tree in front of the house was planted by his mother.

While gathering grapes in an arbor in this garden, in 1847, Mr. Whittier received a bullet wound in the cheek. Two boys were firing at a mark on the grounds of a neighbor, and this mark was near where Whittier stood, but on account of a high fence they did not see him. When the bullet struck him, he was so concerned lest his mother should be alarmed by the accident that he said nothing, not even notifying the boys. He bound up his bleeding face in a handkerchief and called on Dr. Sparhawk, who lived near. As soon as the wound was dressed, he came home and gave his family their first notice of the accident. The boys had not then learned the result of their carelessness. The lad who fired the gun was named Philip Butler, and he has since acquired a high reputation as an artist. The painting representing the Haverhill homestead which is to be seen at the birthplace was executed by this artist. He tells of the kindness with which Whittier received his tearful confession. It was during the first days of the Mexican war, and some of the papers humorously commented upon it as a singular fact that the first blood drawn was from the veins of a Quaker who had so actively opposed entering upon that war.

SCENE IN GARDEN, AT WHITTIER'S FUNERAL

Once while his guest at Amesbury, I went with him to town meeting. He was one of the first men in the town to vote that morning, and after voting spent an hour talking politics with his townsmen. General C., his candidate for Congress, had been intemperate, and the temperance men were making that excuse for voting in favor of Colonel F., who, Whittier said, always drank twice as much as C., but was harder headed and stood it better. Other candidates were being scratched for reasons as flimsy, and our Grand Old Man was getting disgusted with the Grand Old Party,

THE FERRY, SALISBURY POINT

Mouth of Powow in foreground at the right hidden by its own banks in this picture. Hawkswood in distance at extreme right

as represented at that meeting. He said to a friend he met, "The Republicans are scratching like wild cats." In the evening an old friend and neighbor called on him, and was complaining of Blaine and other party leaders. At last Mr. Whittier said, "Friend Turner, has thee met many angels and saints in thy dealings with either of the parties? Thy experience should teach thee not to expect too much of human nature." On the same evening he told of a call Mr. Blaine made upon him some time previously. The charm of his manner, he said, recalled that of Henry Clay, as he remembered him. On that occasion Blaine made a suggestion for the improvement of a verse in the

poem "Among the Hills," which Whittier adopted. The verse is descriptive of a country maiden, who was said to be

"Not beautiful in curve and line."

Blaine suggested as an amendment, —

"Not *fair alone* in curve and line;"

and this is the reading in the latest editions.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, during his residence in Newburyport, was often a guest at the Amesbury home, and he has this to say of each member of the family: "The three members of the family formed a perfect combination of wholly varying temperaments. Mrs. Whittier was placid, strong, sensible, an exquisite housekeeper and 'provider;' it seems to me that I have since seen no whiteness to be compared to the snow of her tablecloths and napkins. But her soul was of the same hue; and all worldly conditions and all the fame of her children — for Elizabeth Whittier then shared the fame — were to her wholly subordinate things, to be taken as the Lord gave. On one point only this blameless soul seemed to have a shadow of solicitude, this being the new wonder of Spiritualism, just dawning on the world. I never went to the house that there did not come from the gentle lady, very soon, a placid inquiry from behind her knitting-needles, 'Has thee any farther information to give in regard to the spiritual communications, as they call them?' But if I attempted to treat seriously a matter which then, as now, puzzled most inquirers by its perplexing details, there would come some keen thrust from Elizabeth Whittier which would throw all serious solution further off than ever. She was indeed a brilliant person, unsurpassed in my memory for the light cavalry charges of wit; as unlike her mother and brother as if she had been born into a different race. Instead of his regular features she had a wild, bird-like look, with prominent nose and large liquid dark eyes, whose expression vibrated every instant be-

tween melting softness and impetuous wit; there was nothing about her that was not sweet and kindly, but you were constantly taxed to keep up with her sallies and hold your own; while her graver brother listened with delighted admiration, and rubbed his hands over bits of merry sarcasm which were utterly alien to his own vein."

The village of Amesbury enjoyed a sense of proprietorship in Whittier which it never lost, even when Danvers

POWOW RIVER AND PO HILL

claimed him for a part of each year. He did not give up the old house, consecrated by memories of his mother and sister, but returned to it oftener and oftener in his last years, and he hoped that he might spend his last days on earth where his mother and sister died. The feeling of the people of Amesbury was expressed in a poem written by a neighbor, and published in the village paper, under the title of "Ours," some stanzas of which are here given: —

"I say it softly to myself,
I whisper to the swaying flowers,
When he goes by, ring all your bells
Of perfume, ring, for he is ours.

" Ours is the resolute, firm step,
Ours the dark lightning of the eye,
The rare sweet smile, and all the joy
Of ownership, when he goes by.

. . . . . .

" I know above our simple spheres
His fame has flown, his genius towers ;
These are for glory and the world,
But he himself is only ours."

The Friends' meeting-house, in 1836, was nearly opposite the Whittier cottage, on the site of the present French Catholic church. Two centuries ago there had been an earlier meeting-house of the Society, also on Friend

FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE AT AMESBURY

Street, and the name of the street was given on this account. The present meeting-house, on the same street, was built in 1851, upon plans made by Mr. Whittier, who was chairman of the committee having it in charge. He once told me that some conservative Friends were worried lest he make the house too ornate. To satisfy them,

he employed three venerable carpenters, one of them a Quaker minister and the other two elders of the Society, and the result was this perfectly plain, neat structure, comfortable in all its appointments. Visitors like to find the seat usually occupied by Whittier. It is now marked

INTERIOR OF FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE

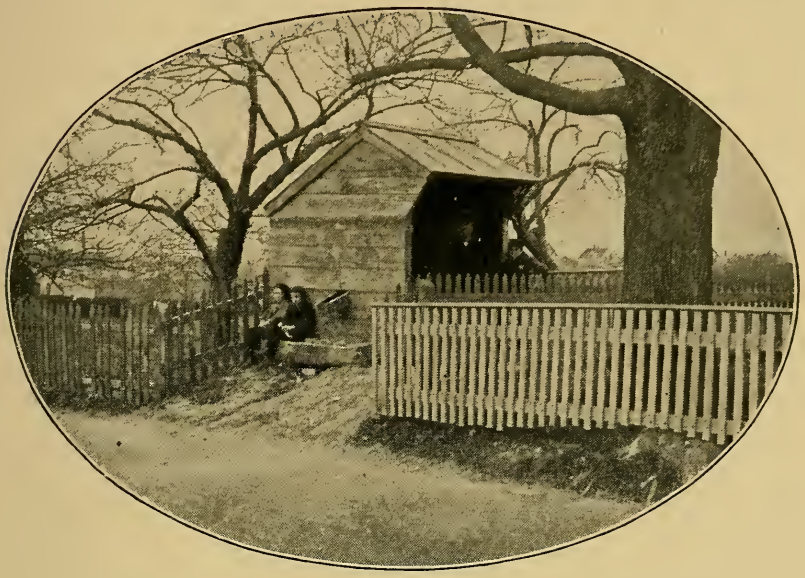
Whittier's usual seat marked, on left side, near "facing seats."

by a silver plate. I have accompanied him to a First Day service here, in which for a half hour no one was moved to say a word. And this was the kind of service he much preferred to one in which the time was "fully occupied." The meeting was dismissed without a spoken word. the signal being the shaking of hands by two of the elders on the "facing seats." Then each worshiper shook the hand of the person next him. There was no sudden separation. The company formed itself into groups for a pleasant social reunion. In the group that surrounded Whittier were ten or twelve octogenarians, whom he told

me he had met in this way almost every week since his boyhood; for even when living in Haverhill, this was the meeting his family attended. It was delightful to see the warmth and tenderness of the greetings of these venerable life-long friends. I once accompanied him to a devotional meeting, where many of the leading Friends of the Society were present, and as the papers had announced the names of several speakers from distant States, he expressed the fear that there would be no opportunity to get "into the quiet." As the speakers followed each other in rapid succession, he asked me if I had a bit of paper and a pencil with me. Then he appeared to be taking notes of the proceedings. I fancied some of the speakers noticed his pencil, and were spurred by it to an enlargement of utterance. When we were at home, I asked what he had written. He smiled and handed me his "notes," which are before me as I write. "Man spoke," "Woman sang," "Man prayed," and so on for no less than fourteen items. Being slightly deaf, he had heard scarcely anything, and had been noting the number and variety of the performances. It was his protest against much speaking. At dinner the same day, his cousin, Joseph Cartland, commented upon the inarticulate sounds that accompanied the remarks of one or two of the speakers. "Let us shame them out of it," he said, "let 's call it grunting." "Oh, no, Joseph," said Whittier, "don't thee do that — take away the grunt, and nothing is left!"

Mr. Whittier had many wonderful stories illustrating the guidance of the spirit to which members of the Society of Friends submitted in the daily intercourse of life. One was of an aged Friend, who never failed to attend meeting on First Day. But one morning he told his wife that he was impelled to take a walk instead of going to meeting, and he knew not whither he should go. He went into the country some distance and came to a lane which led to a house. He was impressed to take this lane, and soon reached a house where a funeral service was in progress. At the

close of the service he arose, and said that he knew nothing of the circumstances connected with the death of the young woman lying in the casket, but he was impelled to say that she had been accused of something of which she was not guilty, and the false accusation had hastened her death. Then he added that there was a person in the room who knew she was not guilty, and called upon this person, whoever it might be, to vindicate the character



CAPTAIN'S WELL

of the deceased. After a solemn pause, a woman arose and confessed she had slandered the dead girl. In telling such stories as this, Mr. Whittier did not usually express full and unreserved belief in their truth, but he maintained the attitude of readiness to believe anything of this kind which was well authenticated, and he approved of the methods of work adopted by the Society for Psychical Research in England and in this country.

The hills encircling the lovely valley of the short and busy Powow River, beginning with the southwestern extremity of the amphitheatre, are: Bailey's, on the decli-

vity of which, overlooking the Merrimac, is the site of Goody Martin's cottage, the scene of the poem of "Mabel Martin;" next is the ridge on which is the Union Cemetery where Whittier is buried; then Whittier Hill, named not for the poet but for his first American ancestor who settled here, and locally called "Whitcher Hill" — showing the ancient pronunciation of the name; then, across the Powow, are Po, Mundy, Brown's, and Rocky hills. On a lower terrace of the Union Cemetery ridge, and near the cemetery, is the Macy house, built before 1654 by Thomas Macy, first town clerk of Amesbury (and ancestor of Edwin M. Stanton, the great war secretary), who was driven from the town for harboring a proscribed Quaker in 1659, as told in the poem "The Exiles;"[1] also, the birthplace of Josiah Bartlett, first signer of the Declaration of Independence after Hancock, whose statue, given by Jacob R. Huntington, a public-spirited citizen of Amesbury, stands in Huntington Square; and near by is "The Captain's Well," dug by Valentine Bagley in pursuance of a vow, as told in Whittier's poem; also the Home for Aged Women, for which Whittier left by his will nearly $10,000. It is to a view of Newburyport as seen from Whittier Hill, a distance of five miles, that the opening lines of "The Preacher" refer: —

> "Far down the vale, my friend and I
> Beheld the old and quiet town;
> The ghostly sails that out at sea
> Flapped their white wings of mystery;
> The beaches glimmering in the sun,
> And the low wooded capes that run
> Into the sea-mist north and south;
> The sand-bluffs at the river's mouth;
> The swinging chain-bridge, and, afar,
> The foam-line of the harbor-bar."

The cemetery in which Whittier is buried can be reached

[1] This house is now cared for by the Josiah Bartlett chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution.

by either the electric line from Merrimac, or the one from Newburyport — the latter approaching nearest the part in which is the Whittier lot. This lot is in the section reserved for the Society of Friends, and is surrounded by a well-kept hedge of arbor vitæ. Here is buried each member of the family commemorated in the poem "Snow-Bound," and also the niece of the poet, who was for twenty years a member of his household. There is a row of nine plain marble tablets, much alike, with Whittier's slightly the largest. At the corner where his brother is buried is a tall cedar, and at the foot of his own grave is another symmetrical tree of the same kind. Between him and his brother lie their father and mother, their two

WHITTIER LOT, UNION CEMETERY, AMESBURY

sisters, their uncle Moses and aunt Mercy. His niece, daughter of his brother, has a place by his side. Inclosed by the same hedge is the burial lot of his dearly-loved cousin, Joseph Cartland. For those who take note of dates it may be said that his father died in 1830, and not, as stated on his headstone, one year later.

Po Hill, originally called Powow, because of the tradi-

tion that the Indians used to hold their powwows upon its summit, is three hundred and thirty-two feet high, and commands a view so extended that many visitors make the ascent. One of Whittier's early prose legends is of a bewitched Yankee whose runaway horse took him to the top of this hill into a midnight powwow of Indian ghosts. In describing the hill he says: "It is a landmark to the skippers of the coasting craft that sail up Newburyport harbor, and strikes the eye by its abrupt elevation and orbicular shape, the outlines being as regular as if struck off by the sweep of a compass." From it in a clear day may be seen Mount Washington, ninety-eight miles away; the Ossipee range; Passaconaway; Whiteface; Kearsarge in Warner; Monadnock; Wachusett; Agamenticus and Bonny Beag in Maine; the Isles of Shoals with White Island light; Boon Island in Maine; and nearer at hand Newburyport with its harbor and bay; Plum Island; Cape Ann; Salisbury and Hampton beaches; Boar's Head and Little Boar's Head; Crane Neck and many other of the beautiful hills of Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, and Danvers. The view of Cape Ann as seen from Po Hill is referred to by Whittier at the opening of the poem "The Garrison of Cape Ann:" —

> "From the hills of home forth looking, far beneath the tent-like span
> Of the sky, I see the white gleam of the headland of Cape Ann."

Down the south side of the Po flows the Powow River in a series of cascades, the finest of which are now hidden by the mills, or arched over by the main street of the village of Amesbury. The hill is celebrated in several of Whittier's poems, including "Abram Morrison," "Miriam," and "Cobbler Keezar's Vision." The Powow, a little way above its plunge over the rocks where it gives power for the mills, flows in front of the Whittier home, and but the width of a block distant. The surface of its swift current is but a few feet below the level of

THE FOUNTAIN, ON MUNDY HILL

Friend Street. Po Hill rises steeply from its left bank. The Powow is mentioned in the poem "The Fountain:" —

"Where the birch canoe had glided
Down the swift Powow,
Dark and gloomy bridges strided
Those clear waters now;
And where once the beaver swam,
Jarred the wheel and frowned the dam."

"The Fountain" is a spring that may be found on the western side of Mundy Hill. The oak mentioned in this poem is gone, and a willow takes its place. The Rocky Hill meeting-house is well worth the attention of

visitors, as a well-preserved specimen of the meeting-houses of the olden time. Its pulpit, pews, and galleries retain their original form as when built in 1785. It is situated on the easternmost of the fine circlet of hills that

ROCKY HILL CHURCH, BUILT IN 1785

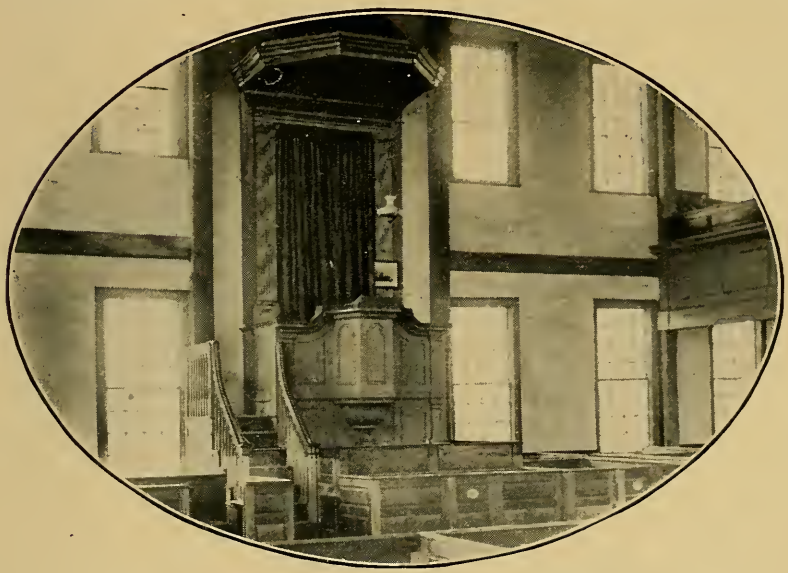
incloses the valley of the Powow. This hill is well named, for here the melting glaciers left their most abundant deposit of boulders. A trolley line from Amesbury to Salisbury Beach passes this venerable edifice.

Salisbury Beach, now covered with summer cottages, will hardly be recognized as the place described by Whittier in his "Tent on the Beach." When that poem was written, not one of these hundreds of cottages was built, and those who encamped here brought tents. Hampton Beach is a continuation of Salisbury Beach beyond the state line into New Hampshire. It has given its name to one of the most notable of Whittier's poems, and several ballads refer to it. "The Wreck of Rivermouth" has for its scene the mouth of the Hampton River, which, winding down from the uplands across salt meadows, and dividing this beach, finds its outlet to the sea. At the

northern end of the beach is the picturesque promontory of Boar's Head, and eastward are seen the Isles of Shoals, and in the further distance the blue disk of Agamenticus. Whittier describes the place with his usual exactness: —

"And fair are the sunny isles in view
East of the grisly Head of the Boar,
And Agamenticus lifts its blue
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er;
And southerly, when the tide is down,
'Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills brown,
The beach-birds dance and the gray gulls wheel
Over a floor of burnished steel."

Rev. J. C. Fletcher, in an article published in 1879, says that he was with Whittier at Salisbury Beach, in



INTERIOR OF ROCKY HILL CHURCH

the summer of 1861, when he saw the remarkable mirage commemorated in these lines in "The Tent on the Beach:" —

"Sometimes, in calms of closing day,
They watched the spectral mirage play;
Saw low, far islands looming tall and nigh,
And ships, with upturned keels, sail like a sea the sky."

Mr. Fletcher was spending several weeks that summer with his family in a tent on the beach. He says: "Here we were visited by friends from Newburyport and Amesbury. None were more welcome than Whittier and his sister, and two nieces, one of whom, Lizzie, as we called her, had the beautiful eyes — the grand features in both the poet and his sister. Those eyes of his sister Elizabeth

MOUTH OF HAMPTON RIVER
Scene of "The Wreck of Rivermouth"

are most touchingly alluded to by Whittier when he refers to his sister's childhood in the old Snow-bound homestead: —

"'Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.'

One day, late in the afternoon, I recall how Elizabeth was enjoying a cup of tea in the family tent, while Whittier and myself were seated upon a hillock of sand outside. It had been a peculiarly beautiful day, and as the sun began to decline, the calm sea was lit up with a dreamy grandeur wherein there seemed a mingling of rose-tint and color of pearls. All at once we noticed that the far-off

SALISBURY BEACH, BEFORE THE COTTAGES WERE BUILT

Scene of "The Tent on the Beach"

Isles of Shoals, of which in clear days only the lighthouse could be seen, were lifted into the air, and the vessels out at sea were seen floating in the heavens. Whittier told me that he never before witnessed such a sight. We called to the friends in the tent to come and enjoy the scene with us. Elizabeth Whittier was then seeing from the shore the very island, reduplicated in the sky, where two years afterwards she met that fatal accident which, after months of suffering, terminated her existence."

Elizabeth fell upon the rocks at Appledore in August, 1863. It was not thought at the time that she was seriously injured, and perhaps Mr. Fletcher is wrong in attributing her death solely to this cause. For many years before and after the death of his sister, Mr. Whittier spent some days each summer at Appledore. It was at his insistence that Celia Thaxter undertook her charming book, "Among the Isles of Shoals."

Other ballads of this region are "The Changeling," and "The New Wife and the Old." The ancient house which is the scene of the last named poem is still standing, and may be seen by passengers on the Boston and Maine road, near the Hampton station. It has a gambrel

HAMPTON RIVER MARSHES

roof, and is on the left when the train is going westward. On the right as the train passes Hampton Falls station may be seen in the distance, shaded by magnificent elms, the house of Miss Gove, in which Whittier died. It was upon these broad meadows and the distant line of the beach that his eyes rested, when he took his last look

upon the scenery he loved and has so faithfully pictured in his verse. The photographs here reproduced were taken by his grandnephew a few days before his death, and the

HOUSE OF MISS GOVE, HAMPTON FALLS

last time he stood on the balcony where his form appears. The room in which he died opens upon this balcony. It was his cousin, Joseph Cartland, who happened to stand by his left side when the picture was taken. This house is worthy of notice aside from its connection with Whittier, as one of the finest specimens of colonial architecture, its rooms filled with the furniture and heirlooms of the ancestors of the present proprietor. A trolley line from Amesbury now passes the house.

As a coincidence that was at the time considered singular, the superstition in regard to the matter of thirteen at table was recalled when Whittier dined for the last time with his friends. During the summer he had lodged at the house of Miss Gove, taking his meals with others of his party in a house adjoining. One evening all had

taken their places at the table except Mr. Whittier. His niece noticed there were twelve seated, and without comment took her plate to a small table in a corner of the room. When her uncle came in, he said in a cheery way, "Why, Lizzie, what has thee been doing, that they put thee in the corner?" Some evasive reply was made, but probably Mr. Whittier guessed the reason, for he was well versed in such superstitions, and sometimes laughingly heeded them. In a few minutes, Mr. Wakeman, the Baptist clergyman of the village, just returned from

CHAMBER IN WHICH WHITTIER DIED

his summer vacation, came in unexpectedly, and took the thirteenth seat that had just been vacated. Whittier's grandnephew, to again break the omen, took his plate over to the table in the corner with his mother. It was all done in a playful way, but the matter was recalled while we were at breakfast next morning. The news then came of the paralysis which had affected Mr. Whittier while dressing to join us. He never again came to the dining room. Another incident of the same evening was more impressive, and remains to this day inexplicable. After sitting for a while in the parlor conversing with

friends, he took his candle to retire, and as he said "Good-night" to his friends, and passed out of the door, an old clock (the clock over the desk) struck once! It had not been wound up for years, and as no one present had ever before heard it strike, it excited surprise — the more so as the hands were not in position for striking. It was an incident that had a marked effect upon a party little

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

inclined to heed omens; and in many ways, without success, we tried to get the clock to strike once more.

A beautiful little lake in the northern part of Amesbury, formerly known as Kimball's Pond, is the scene of "The Maids of Attitash." Its present name was conferred by Whittier because huckleberries abound in this region, and Attitash is the Indian name for this berry. His poem pictures the maidens with "baskets berry-filled," watching

. . . "in idle mood
The gleam and shade of lake and wood."

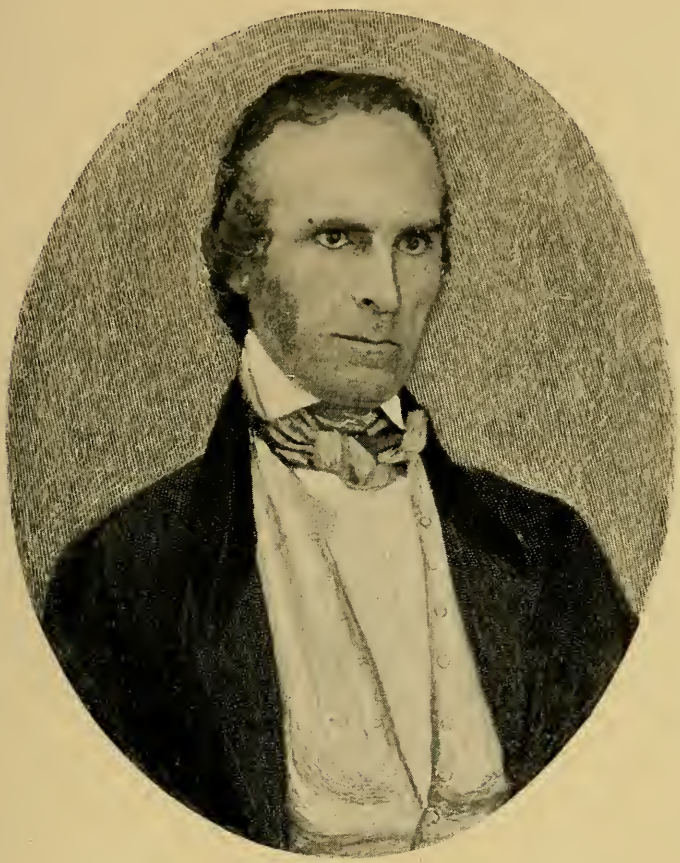
In a letter to the editor of "The Atlantic" inclosing this ballad, he says of Attitash: "It is as pretty as St. Mary's

Lake which Wordsworth sings, in fact a great deal prettier. The glimpse of the Pawtuckaway range of mountains in Nottingham seen across it is very fine, and it has noble groves of pines and maples and ash trees." A trolley line from Amesbury to Haverhill passes this lake; but this is not the line which passes the Whittier birthplace.

Annually, in the month of May, the Quarterly Meeting of the Society of Friends is held at Amesbury, and during the fifty-six years of Mr. Whittier's residence in the village, this was an occasion on which he kept open house, and wherever he happened to be, he came home to enjoy the company of friends, giving up all other engagements. He could not be detained in Boston or Danvers, or wherever else he might be, when the time for this meeting approached. It was an annual event in which his mother and sister took much interest, and after they passed away, the custom was maintained with the same spirit of hospitality with which they had invested it, to the last year of his life.

Among Mr. Whittier's neighbors was an aged pair, a brother and sister, whose simple, old-fashioned ways and quaint conversation he much enjoyed. He thought they worked harder than they had need to do, as the infirmities of age fell upon them, for they had accumulated a competency, and on one occasion he suggested that they leave for younger hands some of the labor to which they had been accustomed. But the sister said, "We must lay by something for our last sickness, and have enough left to bury us." Whittier replied, "Mary, did thee ever know any one in his last sickness to stick by the way for want of funds?" The beautiful public library of Amesbury was built with the money of this aged pair, whose will was made at the suggestion of Whittier. Part of the money Whittier left to hospitals and schools would have been given to this library, had he not known that it was provided for by his generous neighbors.

In his poem "The Common Question," Whittier refers to a saying of his pet parrot, "Charlie," a bird that afforded him much amusement, and sometimes annoyance, by his tricks and manners. His long residence in this



WHITTIER AT THE AGE OF FORTY-NINE

Quaker household had the effect to temper his vocabulary, and he almost forgot some phrases his ungodly captors had taught him. But there would be occasional relapses. He had the freedom of the house, for Whittier objected to having him caged. One Sunday morning, when people were passing on the way to meeting, Charlie had gained access to the roof, and mounted one of the

chimneys. There he stood, dancing and using language he unfortunately had not quite forgotten, to the amazement of the church-goers! Whatever Quaker discipline he received on this occasion did not cure him of the chimney habit, but some time later he was effectually cured; for while dancing on this high perch he fell down one of the flues and was lost for some days. At last his stifled voice was heard in the parlor, in the wall over the mantel. A pole was let down the flue and he was rescued, but so sadly demoralized that he could only faintly whisper, "What does Charlie want?" He died from the effect of this accident, but we will not dismiss him without another story in which he figures: He had the bad habit of nipping at the leg of a person whose trousers happened to be hitched above the top of the boot. One day Mr. Whittier was being worn out by a prosy harangue from a visitor who sat in a rocking-chair, and swayed back and forth as he talked. As he rocked, Whittier noticed that his trousers were reaching the point of danger, and now at length he had something that interested him. Charlie was sidling up unseen by the orator. There was a little nip followed by a sharp exclamation, and the thread of the discourse was broken! The relieved poet now had the floor as an apologist for his discourteous parrot.

At a time when Salmon P. Chase was in Lincoln's Cabinet, but was beginning to think of the possibility of supplanting him at the next presidential election, he visited Massachusetts, and called upon his old anti-slavery friend, Mr. Whittier. Chase told him among other things that he did not like Abraham Lincoln's stories. Whittier said, "But do they not always have an application, like the parables?" "Oh, yes," said Chase, "but they are not decent like the parables!"

Henry Taylor was a village philosopher of Amesbury given to the discussion of high themes in a somewhat eccentric manner, and Whittier had a warm side for such

odd characters. Once when Emerson was his guest, he invited Taylor to meet him, knowing that the Concord philosopher would be amused if not otherwise interested in his Amesbury brother. Taylor found him a good listener, and gave him the full benefit of his theories and imaginings. Next morning Whittier called on him to inquire what he thought of Emerson. "Oh," said he, "I find your friend a very intelligent man. He has adopted some of my ideas."

The likeness of Whittier on page 97 is from a daguerreotype taken in October, 1856, and has never before been

THE WOOD GIANT, AT STURTEVANT'S, CENTRE HARBOR

"Alone, the level sun before;
Below, the lake's green islands;
Beyond, in misty distance dim,
The rugged Northern Highlands."

published in any volume written by or about the poet. Mr. Thomas E. Boutelle, the artist who took this daguerreotype, is now living in Amesbury at the age of eighty-five. He tells me how he happened to get this picture, — a rather difficult feat, as it was hard to induce the poet to sit for his portrait. He had set up a daguerrean saloon in the little square near Whittier's house, and Whittier often

came in for a social chat, but persistently refused to give a sitting. One day he came in with his younger brother Franklin, whose picture he wanted. When it was finished, Franklin said, "Now, Greenleaf, I want your picture." After much persuasion Greenleaf consented, and Mr. Boutelle showed him the plate before it was fully developed, with the remark that he thought he could do better if he might try again. By this bit of strategy he secured the extra daguerreotype here reproduced, but he took care not to show it in Amesbury, for fear Whittier would call it in. He took it to Exeter, N. H., and put it in a show-case at his door. His saloon was burned, and all he saved was this show-case and the daguerreotype, which many of the poet's old friends think to be his best likeness of that period.

Several of Whittier's poems referring to New Hampshire scenery celebrate particular trees remarkable for age and size. For these giants of the primeval forest he ever had a loving admiration. The great elms that shade the house in which he died would no doubt have had tribute in verse if his life had been spared. He invited the attention of every visitor to them. The immense pine on the Sturtevant farm, near Centre Harbor, called out a magnificent tribute in his poem "The Wood Giant." Our engraving on page 99 gives some idea of "the Anakim of pines." There is a grove at Lee, N. H., on the estate of his dearly-loved cousins, the Cartlands, to which he refers in his poem "A Memorial:" —

> "Green be those hillside pines forever,
> And green the meadowy lowlands be,
> And green the old memorial beeches,
> Name-carven in the woods of Lee!"

There is a "Whittier Elm" at West Ossipee, and indeed wherever he chose a summer resort, some wood giant still bears his name.

Visitors to Whittier-Land will find an excursion to Oak

Knoll, in Danvers, to be full of interest. Here the poet, after the marriage of his niece, spent a large part of each of the last fifteen years of his life in the family of his cousins, the Misses Johnson and Mrs. Woodman. Without giving up his residence in Amesbury, where his house was always kept open for him during these years by Hon. George W. Cate, he found in the beautiful seclusion of the fine estate at Oak Knoll a restful and congenial home. Many souvenirs of the poet are here treasured, and the historical associations of the place are worthy of note. Here lived the Rev. George Burroughs, who suffered death as a wizard more than two centuries ago. He was a man

THE CARTLAND HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT

Where Whittier spent the last winter of his life. A century ago the residence of the father of Harriet Livermore

of immense strength of muscle, and his astonishing athletic feats were cited at his trial as evidence of his dealings with the Evil One. The well of his homestead is shown under the boughs of an immense elm, and the canopy now over it was the sounding-board of the pulpit of an ancient

church of the parish so unenviably identified with the witchcraft delusion.

Inquiries are sometimes made in regard to the places in Boston associated with the memory of Whittier. His first visit to the city was in his boyhood, when he came as the guest of Nathaniel Greene, a distant kinsman of his, who was editor of the "Statesman" and postmaster of Boston. Many of his earliest poems were published in the "Statesman" under assumed names, and until lately never recognized as his. Not one of these juvenile productions, of which I have happened upon many specimens, was ever collected. When he was editing the "Manufacturer," he boarded with the publisher of that paper, Rev. Mr. Collier, at No. 30 Federal Street. When visiting Boston in middle life, he felt most at home in the old Marlboro Hotel on Washington Street. He would often leave the hotel for a morning walk, and find a hearty welcome at the breakfast hour from his dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields, at No. 148 Charles Street. In later life, at the home of Governor Claflin, at No. 63 Mount Vernon Street, he was frequently an honored guest. It was here he first met Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, who gives this account of their meeting: "On this morning he came in across the thick carpet with that nervous but soft step which every one who ever saw him remembers. Straight as his own pine tree, high of stature, and lofty of mien, he moved like a flash of light or thought. The first impression which one received was of such eagerness to see his friends that his heart outran his feet. He seemed to suppose that he was receiving, not extending the benediction; and he offered the delicate tribute to his friend of allowing him to perceive the sense of debt. It would have been the subtlest flattery, had he not been the most honest and straightforward of men. We talked — how can I say of what? Or of what not? We talked till our heads ached and our throats were sore; and when we had finished we began again. I remember being surprised at his

quick, almost boyish, sense of fun, and at the ease with which he rose from it into the atmosphere of the gravest, even the most solemn, discussion. He was a delightful converser, amusing, restful, stimulating, and inspiring at once." The winter of 1882–83 he spent at the Winthrop Hotel, on Bowdoin Street, where the Commonwealth Hotel now stands.

A visit to Whittier-Land is incomplete if Old Newbury and Newburyport (originally one town) are left out of the

WHITEFIELD'S CHURCH AND BIRTHPLACE OF GARRISON

itinerary. At the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Newbury, in 1885, a letter from Whittier was read in which he recites some of the reasons for his interest in the town. He says: "Although I can hardly call myself a son of the ancient town, my grandmother, Sarah Greenleaf of blessed memory, was its daughter, and I may therefore claim to be its grandson. Its genial and learned historian, Joshua Coffin, was my first school-teacher, and all my life I have lived in sight of its green hills, and in hearing of its Sabbath bells. Its

history and legends are familiar to me. . . . The town took no part in the witchcraft horror, and got none of its old women and town charges hanged for witches. 'Goody' Morse had the spirit rappings in her house two hundred years earlier than the Fox girls did, and somewhat later a Newbury minister in wig and knee-buckles rode, Bible in hand, over to Hampton to lay a ghost who had materialized himself and was stamping up and down stairs in his military boots. . . . Whitefield set the example since followed by the Salvation Army, of preaching in its streets, and now lies buried under one of the churches with almost the honor of sainthood. William Lloyd Garrison was born in Newbury. The town must be regarded as the Alpha and Omega of the anti-slavery agitation."

The grandmother to whom he refers was born in that part of the town nearest to his own birthplace. The outlet to Country Brook is nearly opposite the Greenleaf place, and Whittier's poem "The Home-Coming of the Bride" describes the crossing of the river and the bridal procession up the valley of the lesser stream, a part of which is known as Millvale because of the mills alluded to in the poem.

The house in which Garrison was born is on School Street next to the Old South meeting-house, in which Whitefield preached, and under the pulpit of which his bones are deposited. Whitefield died in the house next to Garrison's birthplace. The ancient Coffin house, built in 1645, the home of Joshua Coffin, to whom Whittier addressed his poem "To My Old Schoolmaster," is on High Street, about half a mile below State Street. Whittier's cousins, Joseph and Gertrude Cartland, with whom he spent a large part of the last year of his life, lived at No. 244 High Street, at the corner of Broad.

WHITTIER'S SENSE OF HUMOR

III

WHITTIER'S SENSE OF HUMOR

Few men of his day, of equal prominence, have been so greatly misunderstood as Whittier by the public which knows him only by the writings he allowed to be published. These reveal him on the one hand as an earnest reformer bitterly denouncing the sins of a guilty people, and on the other as a prophet of God, with a message of cheer to those who turn them from their evil ways. While slavery existed, he lashed the institution with a whip of scorpions, and in later years, in poems of exquisite sweetness, he sang of "The Eternal Goodness," and brought words of consolation and hope to despairing souls. In the popular mind there has been built up for him a reputation for extreme seriousness and even severity. To be sure, some of the poems in his collected works have witty and even merry lines, but they usually have a serious purpose. The real fun and frolic of his nature were known only to those privileged with his intimacy. He delighted at times in throwing off his mantle of prophecy, and unbending even to jollity, in his home life and among friends. The presence of a stranger was a check to such exuberance. And it was not from any unsocial habit that he fell into this restraint. It was because he found that the unguarded words of a public man are often given a weight they were not intended to bear. If he unbent as one might whose every word has not come to be thought of value, it led to misunderstandings. In his home and among near friends he revealed a charming readiness to engage in lively and frolicsome conversation.

Some stories illustrating his keen sense of humor, and specimens of verse written in rollicking vein for special occasions, which might not properly find place in a serious attempt at biography, I have thought might be allowed in such an informal work as this. Few of the lines I shall here give have ever appeared in any of his collected works, and some of them were never before in print. I am sure I do no wrong to his memory in thus bringing out a phase of his character which could not be fully treated in biography.

I never heard him laugh aloud, but a merrier face and an eye that twinkled with livelier glee when thoroughly amused are not often seen. He would double up with mirth without uttering a sound, — his chuckle being visible instead of audible, — but this peculiar expression of jollity was irresistibly infectious. The faculty of seeing the humorous side of things he considered a blessing to be coveted, and he had a special pity for that class of philanthropists who cannot find a laugh in the midst of the miseries they would alleviate. A laugh rested him, and any teller of good stories, any writer of lively adventures, received a hearty greeting from him. He told Dickens that his "Pickwick Papers" had for years been his remedy for insomnia, and Sam Weller had helped him to many an hour of rested nerves. He loved and admired Longfellow and Lowell, and they were his most cherished friends, but the lively wit of Holmes had a special charm for him, and jolly times they had whenever they met. The witty talk and merry letters of Gail Hamilton, full as they were of a mad revelry of nonsense, were a great delight to him. It was not in praise of but in pity for Charles Sumner that he wrote: —

> "No sense of humor dropped its oil
> On the hard ways his purpose went;
> Small play of fancy lightened toil;
> He spake alone the thing he meant."

As an illustration of his own way of speaking the thing

he did *not* mean, just for fun, take the following: More than thirty years ago, a Division of the Sons of Temperance was organized in Amesbury, and his niece, one of his household, joined it. Her turn came to edit a paper for the Division, and she asked her uncle to contribute something. He had often complained in a laughing way in regard to the late hours of the club, and had threatened to lock her out. This accounts for the tone of the following remarkable contribution to temperance literature from one of the oldest friends of the cause: —

THE DIVISION

"Dogs take it! Still the girls are out,"
Said Muggins, bedward groping,
"'T is twelve o'clock, or thereabout,
And all the doors are open!
I 'll lock the doors another night,
And give to none admission;
Better to be abed and tight
Than sober at Division!"

Next night at ten o'clock, or more
Or less, by Muggins's guessing,
He went to bolt the outside door,
And lo! the key was missing.
He muttered, scratched his head, and quick
He came to this decision:
"Here 's something new in 'rithmetic,
Subtraction by Division!

"And then," said he, "it puzzles me,
I cannot get the right on 't,
Why temperance talk and whiskey spree
Alike should make a night on 't.
D 'ye give it up?" In Muggins's voice
Was something like derision —
"It 's just because between the boys
And girls there 's no Division!"

Whittier's favorite way of enjoying his annual vacation among the mountains was to go with a party of his rela-

tives and neighbors, and take possession of a little inn at West Ossipee, known as the "Bearcamp House." Sturtevant's, at Centre Harbor, was another of his resorts. At these places his party filled nearly every room. It was made up largely of young people, full of frolic and love of adventure. The aged poet could not climb with them to the tops of the mountains ; but he watched their going and

BEARCAMP HOUSE, WEST OSSIPEE, N. H.

coming with lively interest, and of an evening listened to their reports and laughed over the effervescence of their enthusiasm. Two young farmers of West Ossipee, brothers named Knox, acted as guides to Chocorua. They had some success as bear hunters, and supplied the inn with

bear steaks. One day in September, 1876, the Knox brothers took a party of seven of Whittier's friends to the top of Chocorua, where they camped for the night among the traps that had been set for the bears. They heard the growling of the bears in the night, so the young ladies reported, with other blood-curdling incidents. Soon after the Knox brothers gave a husking at their barn,[1] and the whole Bearcamp party was invited. Whittier wrote a poem for the occasion, and induced Lucy Larcom to read it for him as from an unknown author, although he sat among the huskers. It was entitled: —

HOW THEY CLIMBED CHOCORUA

Unto gallant deeds belong
Poet's rhyme and singer's song;
Nor for lack of pen or tongue
Should their praises be unsung,
Who climbed Chocorua!

O full long shall they remember
That wild nightfall of September,
When aweary of their tramp
They set up their canvas camp
In the hemlocks of Chocorua.

There the mountain winds were howling,
There the mountain bears were prowling,
And through rain showers falling drizzly
Glared upon them, grim and grisly,
The ghost of old Chocorua!

On the rocks with night mist wetted,
Keen his scalping knife he whetted,
For the ruddy firelight dancing
On the brown locks of Miss Lansing,
Tempted old Chocorua.

[1] The house of these brothers and the barn in which the husking was held may be seen near the West Ossipee station of the Boston and Maine Railroad. The Bearcamp House was burned many years ago, and never rebuilt.

But he swore — (if ghosts can swear) —
" No, I cannot lift the hair
Of that pale face, tall and fair,
And for *her* sake, I will spare
The sleepers on Chocorua."

Up they rose at blush of dawning,
Off they marched in gray of morning,
Following where the brothers Knox
Went like wild goats up the rocks
Of vast Chocorua.

Where the mountain shadow bald fell,
Merry faced went Addie Caldwell;
And Miss Ford, as gay of manner,
As if thrumming her piano,
Sang along Chocorua.

Light of foot, of kirtle scant,
Tripped brave Miss Sturtevant;
While as free as Sherman's bummer,
In the rations foraged Plummer,
On thy slope, Chocorua!

Panting, straining up the rock ridge,
How they followed Tip and Stockbridge,
Till at last, all sore with bruises,
Up they stood like the nine Muses,
On thy crown, Chocorua!

At their shout, so wild and rousing,
Every dun deer stopped his browsing,
And the black bear's small eyes glistened,
As with watery mouth he listened
To the climbers on Chocorua.

All the heavens were close above them,
But below were friends who loved them, —
And at thought of Bearcamp's worry,
Down they clambered in a hurry, —
Scurry down Chocorua.

Sore we miss the steaks and bear roast —
But withal for friends we care most; —

GROUP AT STURTEVANT'S, CENTRE HARBOR

Gertrude Cartland at Whittier's left, Mrs. Wade and Joseph Cartland at his right. Mrs. Caldwell, wife of Whittier's nephew, at his left shoulder.

Give the brothers Knox three cheers,
Who to bring us back our *dears*,
Left bears on old Chocorua!

The next day after the husking, Lucy Larcom and some others of the party prepared a burlesque literary exercise for the evening at the inn. She wrote a frolicsome poem, and others devised telegrams, etc., all of which were to surprise Whittier, who was to know nothing of the affair until it came off. When the evening came, the venerable poet took his usual place next the tongs, and the rest of the party formed a semicircle around the great fireplace. On such occasions Whittier always insisted on taking charge of the fire, as he did in his own home. He even took upon himself the duty of filling the wood-box. No one in his presence dared to touch the tongs. By and by telegrams began to be brought in by the landlord from ridiculous people in ridiculous situations. Some purported to come from an old poet who had the misfortune to be caught by his coat-tails in one of the Knox bear-traps on Chocorua. It was suggested that he might be the author of the poem read at the husking. Lucy Larcom, who, by the way, was another of the writers popularly supposed to be very serious minded, but who really was known among her friends as full of fun, read a poem addressed to the man in the bear-trap, entitled: —

TO THE UNKNOWN AND ABSENT AUTHOR OF "HOW THEY CLIMBED CHOCORUA"

O man in the trap, O thou poet-man!
What on airth are you doin'? —
We haste to the husking as fast as we can,
— But where 's Mr. Bruin?

We listen, we wait for his sweet howl in vain,
Like the far storm resounding.
Brothers Knox ne'er will see Mr. Bruin again,
Through the dim moonlight bounding.

For, thou man in the trap, O thou poet-y-man,
Scared to flight by thy singing,
Away through the mountainous forest he ran,
Like a hurricane winging.

Aye, the bear fled away, and his traps left behind,
For the use of the poet;
If an echo unearthly is borne on the wind —
'T is the man's — you may know it

By its tones of dismay, melancholy and loss,
O'er his coat-tails' sad ruin;
There 's a moan in the pine, and a howl o'er the moss —
But it 's he — 't is n't Bruin!

And the fire you see on the cliff in the air[1]
Is his eye-balls a-glarin'!
And the form that you call old Chocorua there
Is the poet up-rarin'!

And whenever the trees on the mountain-tops thrill
And the fierce winds they blow 'em,
In most awful pause every bear shall stand still —
He 's writing a poem!

Whittier evidently enjoyed the fun, and after the rest had had their say, he remarked, "That old fellow in the bear-trap must be *in extremis*. He ought to make his will. Suppose we help him out!" He asked one of us to get pencil and paper and jot down the items of the will, each to make suggestions. It ended, of course, in his making the whole will himself, and doing it in verse. It is perhaps the only poem of his which he never wrote with his own hand. It came as rapidly as the scribe could take it. Every one at that fireside was remembered in this queer will — even the "boots" of the inn, the stage-driver, and others who were looking upon the sport from the doorway.

[1] There was a forest fire on a shoulder of Chocorua at this time.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE MAN IN THE BEAR-TRAP

Here I am at last a goner,
Held in hungry jaws like Jonah;
  What the trap has left of me
  Eaten by the bears will be.
So I make, on duty bent,
My last will and testament,
  Giving to my Bearcamp friends
  All my traps and odds and ends.
First, on Mr. Whittier,
That old bedstead I confer,
  Whereupon, to vex his life,
  Adam dreamed himself a wife.
I give Miss Ford the copyright
Of these verses I indite,
  To be sung, when I am gone,
  To the tune the cow died on.
On Miss Lansing I bestow
Tall Diana's hunting bow;
  Where it is I cannot tell —
  But if found 't will suit her well.
I bequeath to Mary Bailey
Yarn to knit a stocking daily.[1]
  To Lizzie Pickard from my hat
  A ribbon for her yellow cat.
And I give to Mr. Pickard
That old tallow dip that flickered,
  Flowed and sputtered more or less
  Over Franklin's printing press.
I give Belle Hume a wing
Of the bird that would n't sing;[2]
  To Jettie for her dancing nights
  Slippers dropped from Northern Lights.
And I give my very best
Beaver stove-pipe to Celeste —
  Solely for her husband's wear,
  On the day they 're made a pair.
If a tear for me is shed,
And Miss Larcom's eyes are red —

[1] She was knitting at the time.
[2] She had refused to sing that evening.

Give her for her prompt relief
My last pocket-handkerchief![1]
My cottage at the Shoals I give
To all who at the Bearcamp live —
Provided that a steamer plays
Down that river in dog-days —
Linking daily heated highlands
With the cool sea-scented islands —
With Tip her engineer, her skipper
Peter Hines, the old stage-whipper.[2]
To Addie Caldwell, who has mended
My torn coat, and trousers rended,
I bequeath, in lack of payment,
All that 's left me of my raiment.
Having naught beside to spare,
To my good friend, Mrs. Ayer,
And to Mrs. Sturtevant,
My last lock of hair I grant.
I make Mr. Currier[3]
Of this will executor;
And I leave the debts to be
Reckoned as his legal fee.

This is all of the will that was written that evening; but the next morning, at breakfast, I found under my plate a note-sheet, with some penciling on it. As I opened it, Mr. Whittier, with a quizzical look, said, "Thee will notice that the bear-trap man has added a codicil to his will." This is the codicil: —

And this pencil of a sick bard
I bequeath to Mr. Pickard;
Pledging him to write a very
Long and full obituary —
Showing by my sad example,
Useful life and virtues ample,
Wit and wisdom only tend
To bear-traps at one's latter end!

[1] Lucy Larcom was then suffering from hay fever.

[2] The papers had an item to the effect that some one had given Whittier a cottage at the Isles of Shoals.

[3] The only lawyer present.

I had to go back to my editorial desk in Portland that day, and immediately received there this note from Mr. Whittier: —

"DEAR MR. P., — Don't print in thy paper my foolish verses, which thee copied. They are hardly consistent with my years and 'eminent gravity,' and would make 'the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things.'"

I had no thought at the time of giving to the public this jolly side of Whittier's character, but do it now with little misgiving, as it is realized by every one that "a little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men." Whittier's capacity for serious work is well known, and his love of play never interfered with it. An earnest man without a sense of humor is a machine without a lubricant, worn out before its work is done. There can be no doubt that Whittier owed his length of days to his happy temperament.

Here is a story of Whittier told by Alice Freeman Palmer: One evening they sat in Governor Claflin's library, in Boston, and he was taking his rest telling ghost stories. Mrs. Claflin had given strict orders that no visitor be allowed to intrude on Mr. Whittier when he was resting. Suddenly, at the crisis of a particularly interesting story, there was a commotion in the hall, and the rest of that story was not told. A lady had called to see the poet, and would not be denied. The domestic could not stop her, and she came straight into the library. She walked up to Whittier and seized both his hands, saying, "Mr. Whittier, this is the supreme moment of my life!" The poor man in his distress blushed like a school-girl, and shifted from one foot to the other; he managed to get his hands free, and put them behind him for further security. And what do you think he said? All he said was, "Is it?" Miss Freeman thought a third party in the way, and slipped out. As she was going upstairs, she heard a quick step behind her, and Whittier took her by the shoulder and shook her, saying as if an-

gry, "Alice Freeman, I believe thee has been laughing at me!" She could not deny it. "What would thee do, Alice Freeman, if a man thee never saw should come up in that way to thee, take both hands, and tell thee it was the supreme moment of his life?"

Probably the most seriously dangerous position in which he was ever placed was on the occasion of the looting and burning of Pennsylvania Hall, in the spring of 1838. His editorial office was in the building, and for two or three days the mob had been threatening its destruction before they accomplished it. It was not safe for him to go into the street except in disguise. And yet it was at this very time that he wrote the following humorous skit, never before in print. Theodore D. Weld had the year before made a contract of perpetual bachelorhood with Whittier, and yet he chose this troublous time to marry the eloquent South Carolina Quakeress, Angelina Grimké, who had freed her slaves and come North to rouse the people, and was creating a sensation on the lecture platform. Her burning words in Pennsylvania Hall had helped to make the mob furious. Whittier's humorous arraignment of his friend for breaking his promise of celibacy was written at this critical time, and he was obliged to disguise himself when he carried his epithalamium on the wedding night to the door of the bridegroom. He had been invited to assist at the wedding service, but as the bride was marrying "out of society," Whittier's orthodoxy compelled him to decline the invitation.

"Alack and alas! that a brother of mine,
A bachelor sworn on celibacy's altar,
Should leave me to watch by the desolate shrine,
And stoop his own neck to the enemy's halter!
Oh the treason of Benedict Arnold was better
Than the scoffing at Love, and then *sub rosa* wooing;
This mocking at Beauty, yet wearing her fetter—
Alack and alas for such bachelor doing!

"Oh the weapons of Saul are the Philistine's prey!
Who shall stand when the heart of the champion fails him;
Who strive when the mighty his shield casts away,
And yields up his post when a woman assails him?
Alone and despairing thy brother remains
At the desolate shrine where we stood up together,
Half tempted to envy thy self-imposed chains,
And stoop his own neck for the noose of the tether!

"So firm and yet false! Thou mind'st me in sooth
Of St. Anthony's fall when the spirit of evil[1]
. . . . . .
Filled the cell of his rest with imp, dragon and devil;
But the Saint never lifted his eyes from the Book
Till the tempter appeared in the guise of a woman;
And her voice was so sweet that he ventured one look,
And the devil rejoiced that the Saint had proved human!"

In 1874, Gail Hamilton's niece was married at her house in Hamilton, and she sent a grotesque invitation to Whittier, asking him to come to her wedding, and prescribing a ridiculous costume he might wear. As a postscript she mentioned that it was her niece who was to be married. Whittier sent this reply, pretending not to have noticed the postscript, but finally waking up to the fact that she was not herself to be the bride: —

AMESBURY, 12th mo. 29th, 1874.

GAIL HAMILTON'S WEDDING

"Come to my wedding," the missive runs,
"Come hither and list to the holy vows;
If you miss this chance you will wait full long
To see another at Gail-a House!"

Her wedding! What can the woman expect?
Does she think her friends can be jolly and glad?

[1] A line is here missing. I had the copy of this poem from Mr. Weld himself when he was ninety years of age. He had accidentally omitted it in copying for me, and his death occurred before the omission was noticed.

Is it only the child who sighs and grieves
For the loss of something he never had?

Yet I say to myself, Is it strange that she
Should choose the way that we know is good
What right have we to grumble and whine
In a pitiful dog-in-the-manger mood?

What boots it to maunder with "if" and "perhaps,"
And "it might have been" when we know it could n't,
If she had been willing (a vain surmise),
It 's ten to one that Barkis would n't.

'T was pleasant to think (if it *was* a dream)
That our loving homage her need supplied,
Humbler and sadder, if wiser, we walk
To feel her life from our own lives glide.

Let her go, God bless her! I fling for luck
My old shoe after her. Stay, what 's this?
Is it all a mistake? The letter reads,
"My *niece*, you must know, is the happy miss."

All 's right! To grind out a song of cheer
I set to the crank my ancient muse.
Will somebody kiss that bride for me?
I fling with my blessing, both boots and shoes!

To the lucky bridegroom I cry all hail!
He is sure of having, let come what may,
The sage advice of the wisest aunt
That ever her fair charge gave away.

The Hamilton bell, if bell there be,
Methinks is ringing its merriest peal;
And, shades of John Calvin! I seem to see
The hostess treading the wedding reel!

The years are many, the years are long,
My dreams are over, my songs are sung,
But, out of a heart that has not grown cold,
I bid God-speed to the fair and young.

All joy go with them from year to year;
Never by me shall their pledge be blamed
Of the perfect love that has cast out fear,
And the beautiful hope that is not ashamed!

An aged Quaker friend from England, himself a bachelor, was once visiting Mr. Whittier, and was shown to his room by the poet, when the hour for retiring came. Soon after, he was heard calling to his host in an excited tone, "Thee has made a mistake, friend Whittier; there are female garments in my room!" Whittier replied soothingly, "Thee had better go to bed, Josiah; the female garments won't hurt thee."

Here is a specimen of his frolicsome verse written after he was eighty years of age. It deals largely in personalities, was meant solely for the perusal of a few friends whom it pleasantly satirized, and was never before in print. When the bronze statue of Josiah Bartlett was to be erected in Amesbury, Whittier of course was called upon for the dedicatory ode, and he wrote "One of the Signers" for the occasion. The unveiling of the statue occurred on the Fourth of July, 1888, and as might have been anticipated, the poet could not be prevailed upon to be present. The day before the Fourth he went to Oak Knoll, "so as to keep in the quiet," he said. But his thoughts were on the celebration going on at Amesbury, and they took the form of drollery. He imagined himself occupying the seat on the platform which had been reserved for him, and these amusing verses were composed, the satirical allusions in which would be appreciated by his townspeople. The president of the day was Hon. E. Moody Boynton, a descendant of the signer, and the well-known inventor of the bicycle railway, the "lightning saw," etc. He has the reputation of having the limberest tongue in New England, as well as a brain most fertile in invention. The orator of the day was Hon. Robert T. Davis, then member of Congress, a former resident of Amesbury, and like Bartlett a physician. Jacob R. Huntington, to whose lib-

erality the village is indebted for the statue, is a successful pioneer in the carriage-building industry of the place. It was cannily decided to give the statue to the State of

JOSIAH BARTLETT STATUE, HUNTINGTON SQUARE, AMESBURY

Massachusetts, so as to have an inducement for the Governor to attend the dedication. Whittier's play on this fact is in the best vein of his drollery. The statue is of dark bronze, and this gave a chance for his amusing reference

to the Kingston Democrats, whom he imagined as coming across the state line to attend the celebration. Dr. Bartlett was buried in their town. Professor J. W. Churchill, of Andover, one of the "heretics" of the Seminary, was to read the poem. The other persons named were eccentric characters well known in Amesbury: —

MY DOUBLE

I 'm in Amesbury, not at Oak Knoll;
'T is my double here you see:
I'm sitting on the platform,
Where the programme places me —

Where the women nudge each other,
And point me out and say:
"That 's the man who makes the verses —
My! how old he is and gray!"

I hear the crackers popping,
I hear the bass drums throb;
I sit at Boynton's right hand,
And help him boss the job.

And like the great stone giant
Dug out of Cardiff mire,
We lift our man of metal,
And resurrect Josiah!

Around, the Hampshire Democrats
Stand looking glum and grim, —
"*That thing* the Kingston doctor!
Do you call *that critter* him?

"The pesky Black Republicans
Have gone and changed his figure;
We buried him a white man —
They 've dug him up a nigger!"

I hear the wild winds rushing
From Boynton's limber jaws,
Swift as his railroad bicycle,
And buzzing like his saws!

But Hiram the wise is explaining
It 's only an old oration
Of Ginger-Pop Emmons, come down
By way of undulation!

Then Jacob, the vehicle-maker,
Comes forward to inquire
If Governor Ames will relieve the town
Of the care of old Josiah.

And the Governor says: "If Amesbury can't
Take care of its own town charge,
The State, I suppose, must do it,
And keep him from runnin' at large!"

Then rises the orator Robert,
Recounting with grave precision
The tale of the great Declaration,
And the claims of his brother physician.

Both doctors, and both Congressmen,
Tall and straight, you 'd scarce know which is
The live man, and which is the image,
Except by their trousers and breeches!

Then when the Andover "heretic"
Reads the rhymes I dared not utter,
I fancy Josiah is scowling,
And his bronze lips seem to mutter:

"Dry up! and stop your nonsense!
The Lord who in His mercies
Once saved me from the Tories,
Preserve me now from verses!"

Bad taste in the old Continental!
Whose knowledge of verse was at best
John Rogers' farewell to his wife and
Nine children and one at the breast!

He 's treating me worse than the Hessians
He shot in the Bennington scrimmage —
Have I outlived the newspaper critic,
To be scalped by a graven image!

Perhaps, after all, I deserve it,
Since I, who was born a Quaker,
Sit here an image worshiper,
Instead of an image breaker!

In giving this picture of a poet at play, I have presented a side of Whittier's character heretofore overlooked, although to his intimate friends it was ever in evidence. I think there are few of the lovers of his verse who, if they are surprised by these revelations, will not also be pleased to become acquainted with one of his methods of recreation.

WHITTIER'S UNCOLLECTED POEMS

IV

WHITTIER'S UNCOLLECTED POEMS

Between the years 1826 and 1835, Mr. Whittier was writing literally hundreds of poems which he never permitted to be collected in any edition of his works; and not only so, but he preserved no copies of them, in later years destroying such as came to his notice. Some of these verses went the rounds of the newspaper press of the country, giving him a widespread reputation as a poet. But in much of his early work we see traces of ambition for fame, and a feeling that the world was treating him harshly. When the change came over his spirit to which reference has been made in a preceding chapter, sweetening all the springs of life, he lost interest in these early productions, some of which were giving him the fame that in his earlier years he so much craved. It was this radical change which no doubt influenced him in his later life to omit from his collected works most of the verses written previous to it. I have in my possession more than three hundred poems which I have found in the files of old newspapers, the great mass of which I would by no means reproduce, although I find nothing of which a young writer of that period need be ashamed. A few of these verses are given below as specimens of the work he saw fit to discard.

The following poem, written when he was nineteen years of age, during his first term in the Haverhill Academy, shows in one or two stanzas the feeling that the world is giving him the cold shoulder : —

I WOULD NOT LOSE THAT ROMANCE WILD

I would not lose that romance wild,
  That high and gifted feeling —
The power that made me fancy's child,
  The clime of song revealing,
For all the power, for all the gold,
That slaves to pride and avarice hold.

I know that there are those who deem
  But lightly of the lyre; —
Who ne'er have felt one blissful beam
  Of song-enkindled fire
Steal o'er their spirits, as the light
Of morning o'er the face of night.

Yet there 's a mystery in song —
  A halo round the way
Of him who seeks the muses' throng —
  An intellectual ray,
A source of pure, unfading joy —
A dream that earth can ne'er destroy.

And though the critic's scornful eye
  Condemn his faltering lay,
And though with heartless apathy,
  The cold world turn away —
And envy strive with secret aim,
To blast and dim his rising fame;

Yet fresh, amid the blast that brings
  Such poison on its breath,
Above the wreck of meaner things,
  His lyre's unfading wreath
Shall bloom, when those who scorned his lay,
With name and power have passed away.

Come then, my lyre, although there be
  No witchery in thy tone;
And though the lofty harmony
  Which other bards have known,
Is not, and cannot e'er be mine,
To touch with power those chords of thine.

Yet thou canst tell, in humble strain,
The feelings of a heart,
Which, though not proud, would still disdain
To bear a meaner part,
Than that of bending at the shrine
Where their bright wreaths the muses twine.

Thou canst not give me wealth or fame;
Thou hast no power to shed
The halo of a deathless name
Around my last cold bed;
To other chords than thine belong
The breathings of immortal song.

Yet come, my lyre! some hearts may beat
Responsive to thy lay;
The tide of sympathy may meet
Thy master's lonely way;
And kindred souls from envy free
May listen to its minstrelsy.

8th month, 1827.

During the first months of Whittier's editorship of the "New England Review" at Hartford, his contributions of verse to that paper were numerous — in some cases three of his poems appearing in a single number, as in the issue of October 18, 1830. Two of these are signed with his initials, but the one here given has no signature. That it is his is made evident by the fact that all but one stanza of it appears in "Moll Pitcher," published two years later. It was probably because of the self-assertion of the concluding lines that the omitted stanza was canceled, and these lines reveal the ambition then stirring his young blood.

NEW ENGLAND

Land of the forest and the rock —
Of dark blue lake and mighty river —
Of mountains reared aloft to mock
The storm's career — the lightning's shock, —
My own green land forever! —

Land of the beautiful and brave —
The freeman's home — the martyr's grave —
The nursery of giant men,
Whose deeds have linked with every glen,
And every hill and every stream,
The romance of some warrior dream ! —
Oh never may a son of thine,
Where'er his wandering steps incline,
Forget the sky which bent above
His childhood like a dream of love —
The stream beneath the green hill flowing —
The broad-armed trees above it growing —
The clear breeze through the foliage blowing ; —
Or hear unmoved the taunt of scorn
Breathed o'er the brave New England born ; —
Or mark the stranger's Jaguar hand
Disturb the ashes of thy dead —
The buried glory of a land
Whose soil with noble blood is red,
And sanctified in every part,
Nor feel resentment like a brand
Unsheathing from his fiery heart !

Oh — greener hills may catch the sun
Beneath the glorious heaven of France ;
And streams rejoicing as they run
Like life beneath the day-beam's glance,
May wander where the orange bough
With golden fruit is bending low ; —
And there may bend a brighter sky
O'er green and classic Italy —
And pillared fane and ancient grave
Bear record of another time,
And over shaft and architrave
The green luxuriant ivy climb ; —
And far towards the rising sun
The palm may shake its leaves on high,
Where flowers are opening one by one,
Like stars upon the twilight sky,
And breezes soft as sighs of love
Above the rich mimosa stray,
And through the Brahmin's sacred grove
A thousand bright-hued pinions play ! —

Yet, unto thee, New England, still
Thy wandering sons shall stretch their arms,
And thy rude chart of rock and hill
Seem dearer than the land of palms!
Thy massy oak and mountain pine
More welcome than the banyan's shade,
And every free, blue stream of thine
Seem richer than the golden bed
Of Oriental waves, which glow
And sparkle with the wealth below!

Land of my fathers! — if my name,
Now humble, and unwed to fame,
Hereafter burn upon the lip,
As one of those which may not die,
Linked in eternal fellowship
With visions pure and strong and high —
If the wild dreams which quicken now
The throbbing pulse of heart and brow,
Hereafter take a real form
Like spectres changed to beings warm;
And over temples worn and gray
The star-like crown of glory shine, —
Thine be the bard's undying lay,
The murmur of his praise be thine!

One of the poems in the same number which contained this spirited tribute to New England was the song given below, which was signed with the initials of the editor, else there might be some hesitation in assigning it to him, for there is scarcely anything like it to be found in his writings. It was evidently written for music, and some composer should undertake it.

SONG

That vow of thine was full and deep
As man has ever spoken —
A vow within the heart to keep,
Unchangeable, unbroken.

'T was by the glory of the Sun,
And by the light of Even,

And by the Stars, that, one by one,
Are lighted up in Heaven!

That Even might forget its gold —
And Sunlight fade forever —
The constant Stars grow dim and cold, —
But thy affection — never!

And Earth might wear a changeful sign,
And fickleness the Sky —
Yet, even then, that love of thine
Might never change nor die.

The golden Sun is shining yet —
And at the fall of Even
There 's beauty in the warm Sunset,
And Stars are bright in Heaven.

No change is on the blessed Sky —
The quiet Earth has none —
Nature has still her constancy,
And *Thou* art changed alone!

The "Review" for September 13, 1830, has a poem of Whittier's prefaced by a curious story about Lord Byron: —

The Spectre. — There is a story going the rounds of our periodicals that a Miss G., of respectable family, young and very beautiful, attended Lord Byron for nearly a year in the habit of a page. Love, desperate and all-engrossing, seems to have been the cause of her singular conduct. Neglected at last by the man for whom she had forsaken all that woman holds dear, she resolved upon self-destruction, and provided herself with poison. Her designs were discovered by Lord Byron, who changed the poison for a sleeping potion. Miss G., with that delicate feeling of affection which had ever distinguished her intercourse with Byron, stole privately away to the funeral vault of the Byrons, and fastened the entrance, resolving to spare

her lover the dreadful knowledge of her fate. She there swallowed the supposed poison — and probably died of starvation! She was found dead soon after. Lord Byron never adverted to this subject without a thrill of horror. The following from his private journal may, perhaps, have some connection with it: —

"I awoke from a dream — well! and have not others dreamed? — such a dream! I wish the dead would rest forever. Ugh! how my blood chilled — and I could not wake — and — and —

> "Shadows to-night
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
> Than could the substance of ten thousand —
> Armed all in proof —

"I do not like this dream — I hate its foregone conclusion. And am I to be shaken by shadows? Ay, when they remind us of — no matter — but if I dream again I will try whether all sleep has the like visions." — Moore's "Byron," page 324.

She came to me last night —
The floor gave back no tread,
She stood by me in the wan moonlight —
In the white robes of the dead —
Pale — pale, and very mournfully
She bent her light form over me —
I heard no sound — I felt no breath
Breathe o'er me from that face of death;
Its dark eyes rested on my own,
Rayless and cold as eyes of stone;
Yet in their fixed, unchanging gaze,
Something which told of other days —
A sadness in their quiet glare,
As if Love's smile were frozen there,
Came o'er me with an icy thrill —
O God! I feel its presence still!
And fearfully and dimly
The pale cold vision passed,
Yet those dark eyes were fixed on me
In sadness to the last.

I struggled — and my breath came back,
As to the victim on the rack,
Amid the pause of mortal pain
Life steals to suffer once again!
Was it a dream? I looked around,
The moonlight through the lattice shone;
The same pale glow that dimly crowned
The forehead of the spectral one!
And then I knew she had been there —
Not in her breathing loveliness,
But as the grave's lone sleepers are,
Silent and cold and passionless!
A weary thought — a fearful thought —
Within the secret heart to keep:
Would that the past might be forgot —
Would that the dead might sleep!

These are the concluding lines of a long poem written in 1829, while he was editing the "American Manufacturer." The poem as a whole was never in print; but these lines of it I find in the "Essex Gazette" of August 22, 1829, from which paper they were copied, as were most of his productions of that period, by the newspapers of the country. They were never in any collection of his works: —

A FRAGMENT

Lady, farewell! I know thy heart
Has angel strength to soar above
The cold reserve — the studied art
That mock the glowing wings of love.
Its thoughts are purer than the pearl
That slumbers where the wave is driven,
Yet freer than the winds that furl
The banners of the clouded heaven.
And thou hast been the brightest star
That shone along my weary way —
Brighter than rainbow visions are,
A changeless and enduring ray.
Nor will my memory lightly fade
From thy pure dreams, high-thoughted girl; —
The ocean may forget what made
Its blue expanse of waters curl,

When the strong winds have passed the sky;
Earth in its beauty may forget
The recent cloud that floated by;
The glories of the last sunset —
But not from thy unchanging mind
Will fade the dreams of other years,
And love will linger far behind,
In memory's resting place of tears!

Many of Whittier's early discarded verses are of a rather gruesome sort, but more are inspired by contemplation of sublime themes, like this apostrophe to "Eternity," which was published in the "New England Review" in 1831:—

ETERNITY

Boundless eternity! the wingéd sands
That mark the silent lapse of flitting time
Are not for thee; thine awful empire stands
From age to age, unchangeable, sublime;
Thy domes are spread where thought can never climb,
In clouds and darkness where vast pillars rest.
I may not fathom thee: 't would seem a crime
Thy being of its mystery to divest
Or boldly lift thine awful veil with hands unblest.

Thy ruins are the wrecks of systems; suns
Blaze a brief space of age, and are not;
Worlds crumble and decay, creation runs
To waste — then perishes and is forgot;
Yet thou, all changeless, heedest not the blot.
Heaven speaks once more in thunder; empty space
Trembles and wakes; new worlds in ether float,
Teeming with new creative life, and trace
Their mighty circles, which others shall displace.

Thine age is youth, thy youth is hoary age,
Ever beginning, never ending, thou
Bearest inscribed upon thy ample page,
Yesterday, forever, but as now
Thou art, thou hast been, shall be: though
I feel myself immortal, when on thee
I muse, I shrink to nothingness, and bow

Myself before thee, dread Eternity,
With God coeval, coexisting, still to be.

I go with thee till time shall be no more,
I stand with thee on Time's remotest age,
Ten thousand years, ten thousand times told o'er;
Still, still with thee my onward course I urge;
And now no longer hear the surge
Of Time's light billows breaking on the shore
Of distant earth; no more the solemn dirge —
Requiem of worlds, when such are numbered o'er —
Steals by: still thou art on forever more.

From that dim distance I turn to gaze
With fondly searching glance, upon the spot
Of brief existence, when I met the blaze
Of morning, bursting on my humble cot,
And gladness whispered of my happy lot;
And now 't is dwindled to a point — a speck —
And now 't is nothing, and my eye may not
Longer distinguish it amid the wreck
Of worlds in ruins, crushed at the Almighty's beck.

Time — what is time to thee? a passing thought
To twice ten thousand ages — a faint spark
To twice ten thousand suns; a fibre wrought
Into the web of infinite — a cork
Balanced against a world: we hardly mark
Its being — even its name hath ceased to be;
Thy wave hath swept it from us, thy dark
Mantle of years, in dim obscurity
Hath shrouded it around: Time — what is Time to thee!

In 1832 a living ichneumon was brought to Haverhill, and was on exhibition at Frinksborough, a section of Haverhill now known as "the borough," on the bank of the river above the railroad bridge. Three young ladies of Haverhill went to see it, escorted by Mr. Whittier. They found that the animal had succumbed to the New England climate, and had just been buried. One of the ladies, Harriet Minot, afterward Mrs. Pitman, a life-long

friend of the poet, suggested that he should write an elegy, and these are the lines he produced : —

THE DEAD ICHNEUMON

Stranger ! they have made thy grave
By the darkly flowing river;
But the washing of its wave
Shall disturb thee never !
Nor its autumn tides which run
Turbid to the rising sun,
Nor the harsh and hollow thunder,
When its fetters burst asunder,
And its winter ice is sweeping,
Downward to the ocean's keeping.

Sleeper ! thou canst rest as calm
As beside thine own dark stream,
In the shadow of the palm,
Or the white sand gleam !
Though thy grave be never hid
By the o'ershadowing pyramid,
Frowning o'er the desert sand,
Like no work of mortal hand,
Telling aye the same proud story
Of the old Egyptian glory !

Wand'rer ! would that we might know
Something of thy early time —
Something of thy weal or woe
In thine own far clime !
If thy step hath fallen where
Those of Cleopatra were,
When the Roman cast his crown
At a woman's footstool down,
Deeming glory's sunshine dim
To the smile which welcomed him.

If beside the reedy Nile
Thou hast ever held thy way,
Where the embryo crocodile
In the damp sedge lay;

When the river monster's eye
Kindled at thy passing by,
And the pliant reeds were bending
Where his blackened form was wending,
And the basking serpent started
Wildly when thy light form darted.

Thou hast seen the desert steed
Mounted by his Arab chief,
Passing like some dream of speed,
Wonderful and brief!
Where the palm-tree's shadows lurk,
Thou hast seen the turbaned Turk,
Resting in voluptuous pride
With his harem at his side,
Veiléd victims of his will,
Scorned and lost, yet lovely still.

And the samiel hath gone
O'er thee like a demon's breath,
Marking victims one by one
For its master — Death.
And the mirage thou hast seen
Glittering in the sunny sheen,
Like some lake in sunlight sleeping,
Where the desert wind was sweeping,
And the sandy column gliding,
Like some giant onward striding.

Once the dwellers of thy home
Blessed the path thy race had trod,
Kneeling in the temple dome
To a reptile god;
Where the shrine of Isis shone
Through the veil before its throne,
And the priest with fixéd eyes
Watched his human sacrifice;
And the priestess knelt in prayer,
Like some dream of beauty there.

Thou, unhonored and unknown,
Wand'rer o'er the mighty sea!
None for thee have reverence shown —
None have worshipped thee!

Here in vulgar Yankee land,
Thou hast passed from hand to hand,
And in Frinksborough found a home,
Where no change can ever come!
What thy closing hours befell
None may ask, and none may tell.

Who hath mourned above thy grave?
None — except thy ancient nurse.
Well she may — thy being gave
Coppers to her purse!
Who hath questioned her of thee?
None, alas! save maidens three,
Here to view thee while in being,
Yankee curious, paid for seeing,
And would gratis view once more
That for which they paid before.

Yet thy quiet rest may be
Envied by the human kind,
Who are showing off like thee,
To the careless mind,
Gifts which torture while they flow,
Thoughts which madden while they glow,
Pouring out the heart's deep wealth,
Proffering quiet, ease, and health,
For the fame which comes to them
Blended with their requiem!

The following poem, which I have never seen in print, I find in a manuscript collection of Whittier's early poems, in the possession of his cousin, Ann Wendell, of Philadelphia. It is a political curiosity, being a reminiscence of the excitement caused by the mystery of the disappearance of William Morgan, in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, in 1826. It was written in 1830, three years before Whittier became especially active in the anti-slavery cause. He was then working in the interest of Henry Clay as against Jackson, and the Whigs had adopted some of the watchwords of the Anti-Masonic party: —

THE GRAVE OF MORGAN

Wild torrent of the lakes! fling out
  Thy mighty wave to breeze and sun,
And let the rainbow curve above
  The foldings of thy clouds of dun.
Uplift thy earthquake voice, and pour
Its thunder to the reeling shore,
Till caverned cliff and hanging wood
Roll back the echo of thy flood,
For there is one who slumbers now
Beneath thy bow-encircled brow,
Whose spirit hath a voice and sign
More strong, more terrible than thine.

A million hearts have heard that cry
Ring upward to the very sky;
It thunders still — it cannot sleep,
But louder than the troubled deep,
When the fierce spirit of the air
Hath made his arm of vengeance bare,
And wave to wave is calling loud
Beneath the veiling thunder-cloud;
That potent voice is sounding still —
The voice of unrequited ill.

Dark cataract of the lakes! thy name
Unholy deeds have linked to fame.
High soars to heaven thy giant head,
  Even as a monument to him
Whose cold unheeded form is laid
  Down, down amid thy caverns dim.
His requiem the fearful tone
Of waters falling from their throne
In the mid air, his burial shroud
The wreathings of thy torrent cloud,
His blazonry the rainbow thrown
Superbly round thy brow of stone.

Aye, raise thy voice — the sterner one
Which tells of crime in darkness done,
Groans upward from thy prison gloom
Like voices from the thunder's home.

And men have heard it, and the might
Of freemen rising from their thrall
Shall drag their fetters into light,
And spurn and trample on them all.
And vengeance long — too long delayed —
Shall rouse to wrath the souls of men,
And freedom raise her holy head
Above the fallen tyrant then.

This poem, which was published in "The Haverhill Gazette" in 1829, was copied in many papers of that time, but was never in any collection of its author's works: —

THE THUNDER SPIRIT

Dweller of the unpillared air,
Marshalling the storm to war,
Heralding its presence where
Rolls along thy cloudy car!
Thou that speakest from on high,
Like an earthquake's bursting forth,
Sounding through the veiléd sky
As an angel's trumpet doth.

Bending from thy dark dominion
Like a fierce, revengeful king,
Blasting with thy fiery pinion
Every high and holy thing;
Smitten from their mountain prison
Thou hast bid the streams go free,
And the ruin's smoke has risen,
Like a sacrifice to thee!

. . . . . .

Monarch of each cloudy form,
Gathered on the blue of heaven,
When the trumpet of the storm
To thy lip of flame is given!
In the wave and in the breeze,
In the shadow and the sun,
God hath many languages,
And thy mighty voice is one!

Here is a poem of Whittier's that will remind every reader of the hymn "The Worship of Nature," which first appeared without a title in the "Tent on the Beach." And yet there is no line in it, and scarcely a phrase, which was used in this last named poem. I find it in the "New England Review," of Hartford, under date of January 24, 1831. It would seem that "The Worship of Nature" was a favorite theme of his, for a still earlier treatment of it I have found in the "Haverhill Gazette" of October 5, 1827, written before the poet was twenty years of age. It is a curious fact that while in the version of 1827 there are a few lines and phrases which were adopted forty years afterward, the lines given here are none of them copied in the final revision of the poem.

THE WORSHIP OF NATURE

"The air
Is glorious with the spirit-march
Of messengers of prayer."

There is a solemn hymn goes up
From Nature to the Lord above,
And offerings from her incense-cup
Are poured in gratitude and love;
And from each flower that lifts its eye
In modest silence in the shade
To the strong woods that kiss the sky
A thankful song of praise is made.

There is no solitude on earth —
"In every leaf there is a tongue" —
In every glen a voice of mirth —
From every hill a hymn is sung;
And every wild and hidden dell,
Where human footsteps never trod,
Is wafting songs of joy, which tell
The praises of their maker — God.

Each mountain gives an altar birth,
And has a shrine to worship given;

Each breeze which rises from the earth
Is loaded with a song of Heaven;
Each wave that leaps along the main
Sends solemn music on the air,
And winds which sweep o'er ocean's plain
Bear off their voice of grateful prayer.

When Night's dark wings are slowly furled
And clouds roll off the orient sky,
And sunlight bursts upon the world,
Like angels' pinions flashing by,
A matin hymn unheard will rise
From every flower and hill and tree,
And songs of joy float up the skies,
Like holy anthems from the sea.

When sunlight dies, and shadows fall,
And twilight plumes her rosy wing,
Devotion's breath lifts Music's pall,
And silvery voices seem to sing.
And when the earth falls soft to rest,
And young wind's pinions seem to tire,
Then the pure streams upon its breast
Join their glad sounds with Nature's lyre.

And when the sky that bends above
Is lighted up with spirit fires,
A gladdening song of praise and love
Is pealing from the sky-tuned lyres;
And every star that throws its light
From off Creation's bending brow,
Is offering on the shrine of Night
The same unchanging subject-vow.

Thus Earth 's a temple vast and fair,
Filled with the glorious works of love
When earth and sky and sea and air
Join in the praise of God above;
And still through countless coming years
Unwearied songs of praise shall roll
On plumes of love to Him who hears
The softest strain in Music's soul.

There was a remarkable display of the aurora borealis in January, 1837, and this poem commemorates the phenomenon: —

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

A light is troubling heaven! A strange dull glow
Hangs like a half-quenched veil of fire between
The blue sky and the earth; and the shorn stars
Gleam faint and sickly through it. Day hath left
No token of its parting, and the blush
With which it welcomed the embrace of Night
Has faded from the blue cheek of the West;
Yet from the solemn darkness of the North,
Stretched o'er the "empty place" by God's own hand,
Trembles and waves that curtain of pale fire, —
Tingeing with baleful and unnatural hues
The winter snows beneath. It is as if
Nature's last curse — the fearful plague of fire —
Were working in the elements, and the skies
Even as a scroll consuming.
Lo, a change!
The fiery wonder sinks, and all along
A dark deep crimson rests — a sea of blood,
Untroubled by a wave. And over all
Bendeth a luminous arch of pale, pure white,
Clearly contrasted with the blue above,
And the dark red beneath it. Glorious!
How like a pathway for the Shining Ones,
The pure and beautiful intelligences
Who minister in Heaven, and offer up
Their praise as incense, or like that which rose
Before the Pilgrim prophet, when the tread
Of the most holy angels brightened it,
And in his dream the haunted sleeper saw
The ascending and descending of the blest!

And yet another change! O'er half the sky
A long bright flame is trembling, like the sword
Of the great angel of the guarded gate
Of Paradise, when all the holy streams
And beautiful bowers of Eden-land blushed red
Beneath its awful wavering, and the eyes

Of the outcasts quailed before its glare,
As from the immediate questioning of God.

And men are gazing at these "signs in heaven,"
With most unwonted earnestness, and fair
And beautiful brows are reddening in the light
Of this strange vision of the upper air:
Even as the dwellers of Jerusalem
Beleaguered by the Romans — when the skies
Of Palestine were thronged with fiery shapes,
And from Antonia's tower the mailed Jew
Saw his own image pictured in the air,
Contending with the heathen; and the priest
Beside the temple's altar veiled his face
From that fire-written language of the sky.

Oh God of mystery! these fires are thine!
Thy breath hath kindled them, and there they burn
Amid the permanent glory of Thy heavens,
That earliest revelation written out
In starry language, visible to all,
Lifting unto Thyself the heavy eyes
Of the down-looking spirits of the earth!
The Indian, leaning on his hunting-bow,
Where the ice-mountains hem the frozen pole,
And the hoar architect of winter piles
With tireless hand his snowy pyramids,
Looks upward in deep awe, — while all around
The eternal ices kindle with the hues
Which tremble on their gleaming pinnacles
And sharp cold ridges of enduring frost, —
And points his child to the Great Spirit's fire.

Alas for us who boast of deeper lore,
If in the maze of our vague theories,
Our speculations, and our restless aim
To search the secret, and familiarize
The awful things of nature, we forget
To own Thy presence in Thy mysteries!

This imitation of "The Old Oaken Bucket" was written in 1826, when Whittier was in his nineteenth year, and except a single stanza, no part of it was ever before

in print. The willow the young poet had in mind was on the bank of Country Brook, near Country Bridge, and also near the site of Thomas Whittier's log house. Mr. Whittier once pointed out this spot to me as one in which he delighted in his youth. On a grassy bank, almost encircled by a bend in the stream, stood, and perhaps still stands, just such a "storm-battered, water-washed willow" as is here described: —

THE WILLOW

Oh, dear to my heart are the scenes which delighted
My fancy in moments I ne'er can recall,
When each happy hour new pleasures invited,
And hope pictured visions more lovely than all.
When I gazed with a light heart transported and glowing,
On the forest-crowned hill, and the rivulet's tide,
O'ershaded with tall grass, and rapidly flowing
Around the lone willow that stood by its side —
The storm-battered willow, the ivy-bound willow, the water-washed willow, that grew by its side.

Dear scenes of past years, when the objects around me
Seemed forms to awaken the transports of joy;
Ere yet the dull cares of experience had found me,
The dearly-loved visions of youth to destroy, —
Ye seem to awaken, whene'er I discover
The grass-shadowed rivulet rapidly glide,
The green verdant meads of the vale wandering over
And laving the willows that stand by its side —
The storm-battered willow, the ivy-bound willow, the water-washed willow, that stands by its side; —

How oft 'neath the shade of that wide-spreading willow
I have laid myself down from anxiety free,
Reclining my head on the green grassy pillow,
That waved round the roots of that dearly-loved tree;
Where swift from the far distant uplands descending,
In the bright sunbeam sparkling, the rivulet's tide
With murmuring echoes came gracefully wending
Its course round the willow that stood by its side —
The storm-battered willow, the ivy-bound willow, the water-washed willow that stood by its side.

Haunts of my childhood, that used to awaken
Emotions of joy in my infantile breast,
Ere yet the fond pleasures of youth had forsaken
My bosom, and all the bright dreams you impressed
On my memory had faded, ye give not the feeling
Of joy that ye did, when I gazed on the tide,
As gracefully winding, its currents came stealing
Around the lone willow that stood by its side —
The storm-battered willow, the ivy-bound willow, the water-washed willow, that stood by its side.

This is a fragment of a poem written in the album of a cousin in Philadelphia, in 1838. It was never before in print: —

THE USES OF SORROW

It may be that tears at whiles
Should take the place of folly's smiles,
When 'neath some Heaven-directed blow,
Like those of Horeb's rock, they flow;
For sorrows are in mercy given
To fit the chastened soul for Heaven;
Prompting with woe and weariness
Our yearning for that better sky,
Which, as the shadows close on this,
Grows brighter to the longing eye.
For each unwelcome blow may break,
Perchance, some chain which binds us here;
And clouds around the heart may make
The vision of our faith more clear;
As through the shadowy veil of even
The eye looks farthest into Heaven,
On gleams of star, and depths of blue,
The fervid sunshine never knew!

In the summer of 1856, Charles A. Dana, then one of the editors of the New York "Tribune," wrote to Whittier, calling upon him for campaign songs for Fremont. He said: "A powerful means of exciting and maintaining the spirit of freedom in the coming decisive contest must be songs. If we are to conquer, as I trust in God we are, a

great deal must be done by that genial and inspiring stimulant." Whittier responded with several songs sung during the campaign for free Kansas, but the following lines for some reason he desired should appear without his name, either in the "National Era," in which they first appeared, August 14, 1856, or with the music to which they were set. A recently discovered letter, written by him to a friend in Philadelphia who was intrusted to set the song to music, avows its authorship, and also credits to his sister Elizabeth another song, "Fremont's Ride," published in the same number of the "Era." As the brother probably had some hand in the composition of this last-mentioned piece, it is given here. This is Whittier's song:—

WE 'RE FREE

The robber o'er the prairie stalks
And calls the land his own,
And he who talks as Slavery talks
Is free to talk alone.
But tell the knaves we are not slaves,
And tell them slaves we ne'er will be;
Come weal or woe, the world shall know,
We 're free, we 're free, we 're free.

Oh, watcher on the outer wall,
How wears the night away?
I hear the birds of morning call,
I see the break of day!
Rise, tell the knaves, etc.

The hands that hold the sword and purse
Ere long shall lose their prey;
And they who blindly wrought the curse,
The curse shall sweep away!
Then tell the knaves, etc.

The land again in peace shall rest,
With blood no longer stained;
The virgin beauty of the West
Shall be no more profaned.
We 'll teach the knaves, etc.

The snake about her cradle twined,
Shall infant Kansas tear;
And freely on the Western wind
Shall float her golden hair!
So tell the knaves, etc.

Then let the idlers stand apart,
And cowards shun the fight;
We 'll band together, heart to heart,
Forget, forgive, unite!
And tell the knaves we are not slaves,
And tell them slaves we ne'er will be;
Come weal or woe, the world shall know
We 're free, we 're free, we 're free!

It was Whittier's habit to freely suggest lines and even whole stanzas for poems submitted to him for criticism, and it may be readily believed that his hand is shown in this campaign song of his sister's: —

FREMONT'S RIDE

As his mountain men followed, undoubting and bold,
O'er hill and o'er desert, through tempest and cold,
So the people now burst from each fetter and thrall,
And answer with shouting the wild bugle call.
Who 'll follow? Who 'll follow?
The bands gather fast;
They who ride with Fremont
Ride in triumph at last!

Oh, speed the bold riders! fling loose every rein,
The race run for freedom is not run in vain;
From mountain and prairie, from lake and from sea,
Ride gallant and hopeful, ride fearless and free!
Who 'll follow, etc.

The shades of the Fathers for Freedom who died,
As they rode in the war storm, now ride at our side;
Their great souls shall strengthen our own for the fray,
And the glance of our leader make certain the way.
Then follow, etc.

We ride not for honors, ambition or place,
But the wrong to redress, and redeem the disgrace;
Not for the North, nor for South, but the best good of all,
We follow Fremont, and his wild bugle call!
Who 'll follow? Who 'll follow?
The bands gather fast;
They who ride with Fremont
Ride in triumph at last!

The following poem was written at the close of his last term at the Academy, and was published in the "Haverhill Gazette" of October 4, 1828, signed "Adrian." Probably no other poem written by him in those days was so universally copied by the press of the whole country. Its rather pessimistic tone no doubt caused the poet to omit it from collections made after the great change in his outlook upon life to which reference has been made on another page.

THE TIMES

"Oh dear! oh dear! I grieve, I grieve,
For the good old days of Adam and Eve."

The times, the times, I say, the times are growing worse than ever;
The good old ways our fathers trod shall grace their children never.
The homely hearth of ancient mirth, all traces of the plough,
The places of their worship, are all forgotten now!

Farewell the farmers' honest looks and independent mien,
The tassel of his waving corn, the blossom of the bean,
The turnip top, the pumpkin vine, the produce of his toil,
Have given place to flower pots, and plants of foreign soil.

Farewell the pleasant husking match, its merry after scenes,
When Indian pudding smoked beside the giant pot of beans;
When ladies joined the social band, nor once affected fear,
But gave a pretty cheek to kiss for every crimson ear.

Affected modesty was not the test of virtue then,
And few took pains to swoon away at sight of ugly men;
For well they knew the purity which woman's heart should own
Depends not on appearances, but on the heart alone.

Farewell unto the buoyancy and openness of youth —
The confidence of kindly hearts — the consciousness of truth,
The honest tone of sympathy — the language of the heart —
Now cursed by fashion's tyranny, or turned aside by art.

Farewell the social quilting match, the song, the merry play,
The whirling of a pewter plate, the merry fines to pay,
The mimic marriage brought about by leaping o'er a broom,
The good old blind man's buff, the laugh that shook the room.

Farewell the days of industry — the time has glided by
When pretty hands were prettiest in making pumpkin pie.
When waiting maids were needed not, and morning brought along
The music of the spinning wheel, the milkmaid's careless song.

Ah, days of artless innocence! Your dwellings are no more,
And ye are turning from the path our fathers trod before;
The homely hearth of honest mirth, all traces of the plough,
The places of their worshiping, are all forgotten now!

I find among Mr. Whittier's papers the first draft of a poem that he does not seem to have prepared for publication. As it was written on the back of a note he received in March, 1890, that was probably the date of its composition: —

A SONG OF PRAISES

For the land that gave me birth;
For my native home and hearth;
For the change and overturning
Of the times of my sojourning;
For the world-step forward taken;
For an evil way forsaken;
For cruel law abolished;
For idol shrines demolished;

For the tools of peaceful labor
Wrought from broken gun and sabre;
For the slave-chain rent asunder
And by free feet trodden under;
For the truth defeating error;
For the love that casts out terror;
For the truer, clearer vision
Of Humanity's great mission; —
For all that man upraises,
I sing this song of praises.

The following poem is a variant of the "Hymn for the Opening of Thomas Starr King's House of Worship," and was contributed in 1883 to a fair in aid of an Episcopal chapel at Holderness, N. H.

UNITY

Forgive, O Lord, our severing ways,
The separate altars that we raise,
The varying tongues that speak Thy praise!

Suffice it now. In time to be
Shall one great temple rise to Thee,
Thy church our broad humanity.

White flowers of love its walls shall climb,
Sweet bells of peace shall ring its chime,
Its days shall all be holy time.

The hymn, long sought, shall then be heard,
The music of the world's accord,
Confessing Christ, the inward word!

That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One faith, one love, one hope restore
The seamless garb that Jesus wore!

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